



Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia

Dispatches

11 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).

RUSI(NS) General Meeting

A General Meeting of RUSI(NS) has been called for 1900 hours, Thursday, 17 March 2022 to present the 2021 Financial Records and the 2022 Budget. Zoom joining instructions were emailed to all members. If you need the instructions again, email RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com.

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 March, Wednesday – RUSI(NS) 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).

New: 16 March, Wednesday - Royal United Services Institute (United Kingdom) discussion "War in Ukraine: Understanding Russia's Military Strategy." 1400-1500 GMT. Online. As fighting continues, the discussion will look at what lessons the war can teach us about Russia's broader military strategy. To register: <https://rusi.org/events/open-to-all/war-ukraine-understanding-russias-military-strategy>.

New: 24 March, Thursday - Navy League of Canada Maritime Affairs Luncheon with Vice-Admiral Baines, Commander Royal Canadian Navy. In-person, in Ottawa. See poster at end of *Dispatches*.

New: 24-25 March, Thursday-Friday - North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network, Nasiffik, the Ted Steven Center for Arctic Security Studies, the Center for Arctic Security and Resilience (CASR) and the Arctic Domain Awareness Center (ADAC) virtual Advancing Collaboration in Canada-U.S. Arctic Regional Security (ACCUSARS) III virtual workshop. The workshop will focus on specific initiatives that will improve understanding and enhance collaboration between Canada, U.S., and Kingdom of Denmark/Greenlandic Arctic security and defence professionals, and seeks insights from participants for their professional and informed perspectives in order to create a report of concerns, opportunities, recommendations, and inquires to address anticipated challenges to the North American Arctic security environment. For more info, email RUSI(NS). To register: https://alaska.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qlKOpqpATT27S2R-bAglSA

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 "RCN Ship Pennant Numbers," 10 March 2022
https://rusi-ns.ca/pennant_numbers/

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/

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

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

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

New: Military Institute of Windsor *Communiqué*, Volume XL, Number 3, March 2022

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

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

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 11, Issue 1, 7 March 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.

Jeff Collins @jeffreyfcollins 5 Mar tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: 1/Much to agree with in this @JohnIbbitson @globeandmail piece but some points of departure include here: "Canada may need to abandon efforts to create jobs at home, instead purchasing equipment from other countries off the shelf"

(Canada may finally have the political will to strengthen our depleted defence capacity
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-canada-may-finally-have-the-political-will-to-strengthen-our-depleted/>)

The tweet threat is well worth reading.



The Naval Association of Canada @navalassn 2 Mar tweeted: VADM(Retired) Bob Davidson writes that any future submarine procurement must deliver optimum military capability while remaining politically and economically affordable. This can only be achieved if we widen the aperture of options. #submarines #cdnpoli

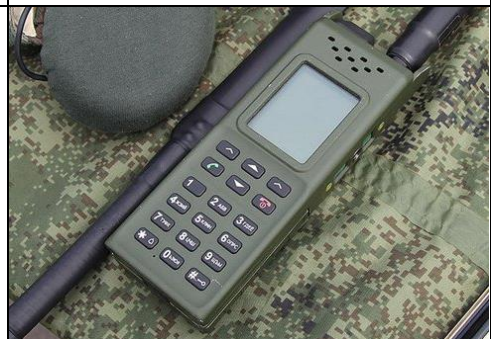
(Submarine Procurement - Widening the Aperture of Options
<https://www.navalassoc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Davidson-Submarines-1.pdf>)

RUSI(NS) retweeted: #Submarines are strategic assets: through their covertness they add to defence of CAN 🇨🇦 by considerably disturbing planning & operating considerations of adversaries. Part of balanced @RoyalCanNavy



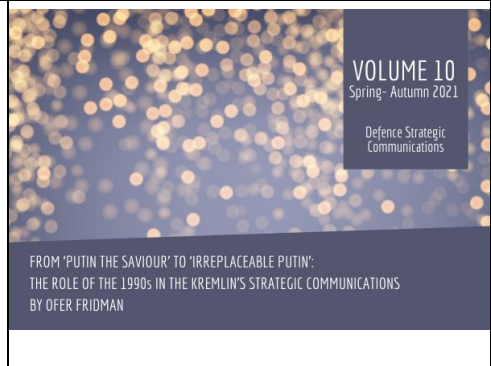
RUSI @RUSI_org 9 Mar tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: 'While #Ukrainian forces may be numerically inferior on the battlefield, they have an opportunity to be superior in the electromagnetic spectrum' write @Sam_Cranny and @tomwithington in the latest #RUSICommentary.

(Russian Comms in Ukraine: A World of Hertz
<https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/russian-comms-ukraine-world-hertz>)



STRATCOMCOE @STRATCOMCOE 19 Mar tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: Putin has built his domestic #stratcom on the collective trauma of 1990s constructing the narrative that only he can keep Russia on its 'right' course. The fear of "wild nineties" has become an implicit threat to justify his continuous presidency.

(From 'Putin the Saviour' to 'Irreplaceable Putin': The Role of the 1990s in the Kremlin's Strategic Communications
<https://stratcomcoe.org/publications/from-putin-the-saviour-to-irreplaceable-putin-the-role-of-the-1990s-in-the-kremlins-strategic-communications/228>)



Symbol War

Interesting tweet thread read on the Z symbol being used by the Russians in the Ukraine-Russia war.

Kamil Galeev @kamilkazani 6 Mar tweeted (<https://twitter.com/kamilkazani/status/1500495309595725831>): Let's discuss what's happening in Russia. To put it simply, it's going full fascist. Authorities launched a propaganda campaign to gain popular support for their invasion of Ukraine and they're getting lots of it. You can see "Z" on these guys' clothes. What does it mean?

Including:

Centrist Dad @dad_centrist Mar 6 retweeted: Z is a strange choice reminding us of last time an overly ambitious imperialist Russia had their asses handed to them by a supposedly inferior enemy. In 1905 the Japanese hoisted the Z signal before humiliating the Russian fleet in the Straits of Tsushima. <https://historynet.com/battle-of-tsushima>



Major General (just retired!) Mick Ryan @WarintheFuture 9 Mar tweeted: Two weeks since the Russian invasion of #Ukraine began. Today I will examine the discovery of 'old truths' about war, and how it has impacted on leadership in this particular conflict. 1/25

As one of our senior RUSI(NS) colleagues tweeted, this is a very good read.

(<https://twitter.com/WestCoastCmdre/status/1501753158493564931>)



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's troop commitment to Eastern Europe is exposing weak points in its military

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-ukraine-russia-putin-canadian-armed-forces-1.6370874>

"The Royal Canadian Navy, with its newly modernized frigates, is hamstrung when it comes to forming task forces because its dedicated replenishment ship has little in the way of defensive systems needed for a war zone. It would have to be outfitted to defend itself and senior defence officials have long argued that makes the MV Asterix unsuitable and highlights the need to construct dedicated joint support ships."

The RCN can operate using allied logistics ships. That is the advantage of an alliance like NATO. But, yes, three replenishment oilers in the RCN would make for a more capable and balanced navy.



'Tanks and mud are not friends' — Ukraine's terrain is proving to be a problem for Russian armor

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/russian-tanks-stuck-mud-ukraine/>

'General Mud' has a say in the conduct of operations in Ukraine.

Recall the article "In Russia's Ukraine plans, how much does the mud matter?" which forecast less problems for Russian armour.

<https://toronto.citynews.ca/2022/02/14/in-russias-ukraine-plans-how-much-does-the-mud-matter/>



The Mysterious Case of the Missing Russian Air Force

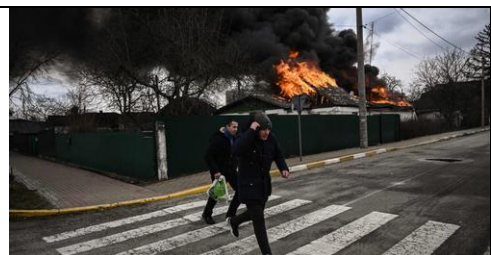
<https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/mysterious-case-missing-russian-air-force>



Reliable Sources For 'Open-Source Intelligence' From Ukraine

<https://talkingpointsmemo.com/news/open-source-intelligence-from-ukraine>

"Open-source intelligence (OSINT) is the collection and analysis of data gathered from open (publicly available) sources to produce actionable intelligence."



There are a lot more eyes watching these days.

Canada pulls out of upcoming Arctic Council meeting in Russia

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/canada-pulls-out-arctic-council-russia-1.6373315>

Russia's actions threaten both global security and Arctic security.



The Weapon the West Used Against Putin

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/03/russia-ukraine-invasion-classified-intelligence/626557/>

"... Russia's invasion has ushered in one development that is altogether new and could dramatically change geopolitics in the future: the real-time public disclosure of highly classified intelligence."

Hmm, intelligence as information operations, influence activities.



How Russia built its new narrative of war

<https://wavellroom.com/2022/02/28/russia-narrative-of-war/>



Ukrainian drone enthusiasts sign up to repel Russian forces

<https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/ukrainian-drone-enthusiasts-sign-repel-russian-forces-83256532>



Russia Never as Strong as It Looks

<https://jamestown.org/program/russia-never-as-strong-as-it-looks/>



How cheap Chinese tires might explain Russia's 'stalled' 40-mile-long military convoy in Ukraine

<https://theweek-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/theweek.com/russo-ukrainian-war/1010857/how-cheap-chinese-tires-might-explain-russias-stalled-40-mile-long?amp>



Logistics! Including equipment maintenance.

Here's Why Navy Aircraft Carriers Can't Help Ukraine

<https://gcaptain.com/us-navy-aircraft-carriers-ukraine/>

There is a geo-legal aspect to the Ukraine-Russia war which needs to be understood. The "Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits"

(<https://cil.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/formidable/18/1936-Convention-Regarding-the-Regime-of-the-Straits.pdf>) applies.



Primer: CTIS & tyre choice

<https://www.tanknology.co.uk/post/primer-ctis-tyres>

Some reading for those wanting to understand the challenges of vehicle movement in the Ukraine mud.



Putin Lost the Digital War Abroad. Will He Lose at Home?

<https://www.defenseone.com/technology/2022/03/putin-lost-cyber-and-information-war-abroad-will-he-lose-home/362794/>



There are so many interesting information operations and cyber ops lessons coming out of the Ukraine-Russia war. Hopefully Western militaries are learning them now, not later, and adapting quickly.

Why Is Ukraine's Internet Still Up? Perhaps Because the Invaders Need It

<https://www.defenseone.com/threats/2022/03/why-ukraines-internet-still-perhaps-because-invaders-need-it/362854/>

This ol' maxim: you can't jam all the radio frequencies without adversely affecting your own communications.

Hmm, hopefully Western militaries are paying close attention to the pros and cons of internet access in a war theatre. 'Net war' is taking on a new (at least, new publicly) meaning. Can envision how necessary it will be for militaries to factor in internet service and platform providers in future (current?) plans and operations.



War in Ukraine a wake-up call for Canada and its allies

<https://nationalpost.com/news/john-ivison-war-in-ukraine-a-wake-up-call-for-canada-and-its-allies>

"If freedom is to triumph, we need to grasp that our world has been turned upside down and we may have to defend the liberties we have taken for granted for the past 77 years."



The minutiae of war and shipping

<https://splash247.com/the-minutiae-of-war-and-shipping/>

It already has become very obvious, what with the world so interconnected as it is, especially in trade and finance, that the Ukraine-Russia war is not geographically confined. It is affecting everyone.



A Winning Strategy in Ukraine

<https://www.hudson.org/research/17637-a-winning-strategy-in-ukraine>



The Invasion of Ukraine Is Causing Crisis at Sea

https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/07/ukraine-shipping-supply-war/?tpcc=recirc_latest062921&utm_source=PostUp&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Editors%20Picks%20OC&utm_term=40191&tpcc=Editors%20Picks%20OC



Poland Offers Fighter Jets for Ukraine, But US Rejects Swap-and-Send Idea

<https://www.defenseone.com/threats/2022/03/poland-offers-fighter-jets-ukraine-will-us-agree-twist/362928/>

It strikes this commenter after reading all the articles about the possible transfer of Russian-built fighters and the provision of Russian small arms to Ukraine that there is a lesson here, albeit one that doesn't immediately help the current war situation. Major powers, and maybe middling ones like Canada, should recover basic (often Russian) military material including weapons from conflict areas after the fighting has ceased and should keep them ('war booty?') in order to be able to make them available to friendly states when those states need them for defence and cannot use more complicated material due to training or logistics.

See also: At a secret airfield in Eastern Europe, a multinational effort to send weapons to Ukraine proceeds at high speed

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/06/politics/mark-milley-ukraine-military-assistance/index.html>



The West is failing Ukraine

<https://nationalpost.com/opinion/derek-h-burney-the-west-stands-by-while-ukraine-fights-for-its-life>

Former ambassador Burney's is well-worded and bang-on the mark – and brought to mind the word that I've had in mind lately about the response of the West+ to Russia's assault on Ukraine, 'feckless,' i.e., feeble, irresponsible.



The world has changed. Canada needs a serious foreign policy

<https://nationalpost.com/opinion/michael-chong-the-world-has-changed-canada-needs-a-serious-foreign-policy>

Conservative MP and foreign affairs critic Michael Chong's column is also quite right, arguing for something that RUSI(NS) has long argued Canada desperately needs, alongside relevant and sober defence and security policies.

Are Canadians just too cheap to buy their prime minister a modern aircraft?

<https://nationalpost.com/opinion/colby-cosh-are-canadians-just-too-cheap-to-buy-their-prime-minister-a-modern-aircraft>

Finally, Colby Cosh nails the procurement follies of this country as best exemplified in the state of our Polaris CC-15001 ... and with a worthwhile dollop of reasonable-minded perspective, too.

Not sure where I read it this week, but it was a particularly lethal critique that Canada's government "moves at the speed of bureaucracy" when instead it should do so at the "speed of reality." Reality has been well and truly served to us all lately, thanks to Vladimir Putin – and those surely soon to follow from Xi Jinping - and if his machinations don't inspire Canada to start thinking and acting like a serious country, then nothing will, and we'll only have our ourselves to blame.

Other Sources:

#China

Report to Congress on Chinese Naval Modernization

<https://news.usni.org/2022/03/09/report-to-congress-on-chinese-naval-modernization-14>

#information operations

The Kremlin's Playbook: Fabricating Pretext to Invade Ukraine - More Myths

<https://euvsdisinfo.eu/the-kremlins-playbook-fabricating-pretext-to-invade-ukraine-more-myths/>

A Guide to Deciphering Pro-Kremlin Disinformation Around Putin's War

<https://euvsdisinfo.eu/a-guide-to-deciphering-pro-kremlin-disinformation-around-putins-war/>

#intelligence

Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community

<https://www.hsdl.org/?abstract&did=864999>

#law

The Troubled Homecoming: Seeking accountability against Canadian foreign fighters returning home from abroad

https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/20220207_Troubled_Homecoming_C-CAT_Teich_Matas_PAPER_FWeb.pdf

#leadership

(Re)serve to Lead: Leading a Reserve Subunit

<https://thearmyleader.co.uk/leading-reserve-subunit/>

UK but comparisons always useful.

#space

When Russia invaded Ukraine, it threatened peace and co-operation in outer space

<https://theconversation.com/when-russia-invaded-ukraine-it-threatened-peace-and-co-operation-in-outer-space-178397>

RUSI(NS) is planning a speaker event on space operations.

#United States

U.S. Military Forces in FY 2022: Peering into the Abyss

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/us-military-forces-fy-2022-peering-abyss>

Other:

Royal Canadian Navy Your Navy Today - Volume 5 Issue 2

<http://www.navy-marine.forces.gc.ca/en/news-ynt/2022/vol-5-iss-2.page>

Security Affairs Committee Synopsis

O Canada

The North Warning System upgrade and replacement has been on the books for decades as well as Canada's political decision in regard to ballistic missile defence. With the current situation with Russia, it shows that successive governments have not met threats to our own sovereignty and defence, and also our inaction has placed our main ally at risk. One immediate response would be to fund air early warning aircraft as soon as practical to cover the air defence gaps in the near term followed by an emergency program to replace and enhance the North Warning System. It will also require long range strategic refueling aircraft, forward operating bases and new fighter aircraft capable of operating under marginal conditions. The navy might participate by acquiring suitable undersea systems as well capable of reaching out and 'touching' foreign vessels or submarines which has now become an issue. Russia has actually made claims on territory that we generally thought was part of our territory, yet we have done little to ensure that we have the necessary capability to deal with the situation. It is now painfully obvious that Russia will not stick to the laws or norms of conduct. Canada needs to take action, actual action to correct these gaps as soon as possible while we are still able to correct the issue.

Canada is short 10k military personnel with a further 10k either not trained or have issues that preclude their effective use out of a roughly 100k establishment - basically we're missing 20% of our forces when we need them most. Our recruiting system is broken and is of limited value when we need folks. The dark days of the 1990s did enormous damage going from recruiting and training up to 10k service personnel per year to sometimes less than 1500 personnel. The recruiting system got used to the smaller numbers and has often failed to meet recruiting targets. Finding people willing to join was not a problem when proper attraction and information were made available. People often languished in a recruiting model not used to actually bringing people into the forces in favour of an overly bureaucratic system. A failed recruiting system, an anemic training system and a completely dysfunctional procurement system complete the disaster awaiting our country. This needs to be sorted out now, waiting and hoping it goes away will not work.

China

The Para-Olympics are ongoing in Beijing and it seems that things are going well despite China's apparent loss of control over the virus especially in Hong Kong where they have achieved the worst outbreak so far in the pandemic. It is anticipated that Hong Kong will undergo one of China's famous lockdowns which may finish Hong Kong as a major financial centre in favour of Singapore. China's action towards Hong Kong should seal its fate to become just another Chinese city as opposed to a successful financial hub. Time will tell but there is a reasonable view that the Communist Chinese Party's (CCP) ham-fisted actions in anti-democracy regulations, political influence in the legal system that is been in place coupled with incompetence regarding actions to curtail the spread of the virus will likely end Hong Kong's envied position as a major financial hub.

The CCP is taking a rather interesting approach to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Officially it has stated that it blames the US and NATO for this event, stating that they had not listened to Russia's legitimate security concerns. It also showed that it was troubled by the Russian attack by abstaining at the UN Security council vote condemning the Russian attack on Ukraine. It has also offered to take a

mediator's role in any peace talks. The CCP's position is one where they do not wish to offend Russia but also being careful not to be too forthright about this event so as to antagonize the US and the EU. The CCP is also concerned about how quickly and effectively President Biden was able to unify the West against Russia, something it must now take into account if it were to take military action against Taiwan or another competitor such as India. At the moment, the CCP is actually more concerned how the imposed sanctions will affect the Chinese economy, given that China is already undergoing economic strain caused by the meltdown of Chinese property industry as well as to the fallout from Chinese banks collapse. More recently, a growing number of Chinese cities and towns are now declaring bankruptcy indicating a worsening economic situation. A war of any sort was not what China was looking for at this time. The CCP is seeing very real and concerning indications that show that the public is growing less happy about the current circumstances with pandemic lockdowns, declining economic activities, lower growth figures coupled with rising unemployment amongst the educated part of the population.

The CCP spokesman Zhao Lijan stated 9 March 2022 that "the West should avoid undermining China's rights or interests by imposing severe financial penalties on Russia." Russian-Chinese relations have blossomed in recent years hitting an all-time high last year. Sanctions on Russia will directly impact China's already suffering economy. This year's growth is the lowest in decades, with this year's growth being estimated at 5.5% but thought to be somewhat optimistic. Some South Asian sources indicate that official CCP financial figures are less than accurate due to the CCP's inner system for promotion where 'success' is measured in growth and therefore, any up and coming bureaucrat adjusts figures to have them show a positive figure for their area of responsibility - this type of 'inflation' continues at each level. There is one thing about Chinese figures that one can take to the bank, that they are unreliable.

On the military side, China has reduced its flights into Taiwan's air defence identification zone; this is down considerably from this time last year. Last year over 960 individual incursion occurred by Chinese aircraft. This year the numbers are smaller per occasion but still ongoing. China has not taken a major action or activity that is above normal recently. It is theorised that China's leadership is watching the Russia-Ukraine war with interest and one might suspect horror. Russia was always considered the technological leader in military technology. Russian efforts in Ukraine have been less than satisfactory as the less equipped Ukrainian troops seem to be putting up strong opposition to the vaunted Russian war machine. Russia has not even had success in any domain thus far including cyber, air, naval as well as ground operations taking heavy personnel and equipment losses. One other disturbing point is that NATO, EU and like-minded nations have banded together in an effective way to employ economic warfare that is devastating the Russian economy far harder than anticipated. China also observed that these nations are now saying that they will consider more active measures earlier to ensure embattled democracies have the necessary tools to defend themselves. A point not lost on Chinese leadership.

This is a critical time for the CCP and the Xi gang as a major downfall or international event could impact China in a way not anticipated, immediately prior to critical party meetings this fall, when it is expected Xi will be granted an unprecedented third term as president as well as party secretary amongst other positions. Xi's faction is not the only factions looking at the Russia-Ukraine war with interest. It could get messy this fall.

Russia and Belarus

The problem at the moment is there is almost too much information of varying quality to analyse properly and to make sense out of every action and reaction within the theatre of operations. Some things seem to become a little clearer as time goes on and some are a little strange to say the least.

While there is a real temptation to cover interesting or high profile material, it is some of the lower less exciting information that is more interesting so let's begin on our journey into recent events of consequence in the Russia-Ukraine war with emphasis on the Russians. But we will look at Belarus first.

The Belarussian leader, Alexander Lukashenko, is viewed as the last dictator in Europe. He is not accepted as the legitimate leader of Belarus by most of Europe. He has been seen to eliminate opposition by various means, tried to use migrants as a weapon of war against his neighbours and most recently invited Russian troops into Belarus to 'exercise' which also allowed for invasion preparations. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the leader who was apparently elected by the population, has made several calls to the Belarussian public and security forces not to assist the Russian aggressors and not to allow them to attack from Belarus. This last part was not successful, but there have been major issues that will cause the Lukashenko regime and Russia increasing problems. The Belarussian armed forces were supposed to attack in the west, supporting Russian plans however, the rank and file of the armed forces disagreed and submitted their resignations. The numbers were significant and the Belarussian Army is no longer able to conduct operations and therefore will not participate in the attack. The Deputy Defence Minister Major General Viktor Gulevich has submitted his own resignation. So Russia gets to use Belarussian territory for now, but it appears further opposition to their presence is growing in Belarus. Imagine if the security forces now change allegiance thus cutting Russian troops off from their supply chain completely not to mention the downfall of the Lukashenko regime in favour of a pro-Western leader. This is not completely verified but there does seem to be some truth to this issue. No Belarussian troops have so far entered Ukraine except to fight on Ukraine's side.

Russia continues to attack on a number of axes but none of these attacks have been completely successful if the goal was to take the major cities within a few days. Even in the south, there have been limited successes where the Port of Kherson was 'officially' taken but Russian forces do not seem to have control and have been unable to deal with civilian unrest within the city. Mariupol has not fallen despite severe attacks. Early suggestions indicated that the city was surrounded however the circle is not closed in the north and the west. The Ukrainian Navy also is still in existence and apparently attacked a Russian patrol ship called the *Vasily Byko* which may have sunk. This ship is a lightly armed patrol ship of about 3300 tons and armed with a 57mm gun and smaller weapons. It was part of the attack on Snake Island that became legendary early in the war.

Russian forces appear to be following a similar action against Ukrainian cities as they used in the Syrian civil war and are using copious amounts of artillery against civilian and non-military targets. Russian forces were allegedly famous for targeting hospitals especially which they seem to be doing now as well. This is the use of artillery to try to cut troop losses in the assault. Creating large areas of rubble in cities is a dangerous choice as often the damaged buildings make for better defensive positions. Canadian troops at Ortona, Italy, realized this quickly and developed better ways to fight in built up areas. Canadian troops were successful in driving out German paratroopers from the town. Explosives and hand-to-hand combat were effective in this battle.

Although there are so many more issues, I would like to discuss are the estimates of Russian losses. The Russians have released a list of official losses which are considered low given the nature of the fight. The US has estimated that somewhere between 2000 and 4000 Russian troops have been killed so far and the Ukrainians have announced that more than 12k have been killed. Outside observers have placed the actual number above the number of the US but suggest that the Ukrainian figures are closer to the actual losses. If so, Russian authorities will have to deal with a lot of angry mothers and this will not go over well.

Speaking of other losses, the images from multiple sources show significant equipment losses. More importantly, although tanks, infantry fighting vehicles and armoured personnel carriers have been hit, it is the loss in soft skinned vehicles particularly fuel and water tankers that seem to be more numerous. It is likely that the Ukrainians are specifically targeting these types of vehicles as Russian armour cannot go far without fuel. Gradually these losses will achieve what infantry most like, helpless tanks missing fuel and ammunition thus separating them from the infantry that will now be forced to fight on foot. What is also extraordinary is the large number of vehicles just left needing just a little bit of fuel to operate again. Again, a conversation with a veteran of the Canadian First Division's brief pre-Dunkirk effort in France stated that all the vehicles that they were forced to leave behind were destroyed or damaged in such a way as to prevent their future use. Even hammers through engine blocks, draining the oil and running the engine and good old fashion burning were used to do the job. One cannot see this activity in this current campaign. It seems to indicate an army already defeated, choosing to run rather than fight.

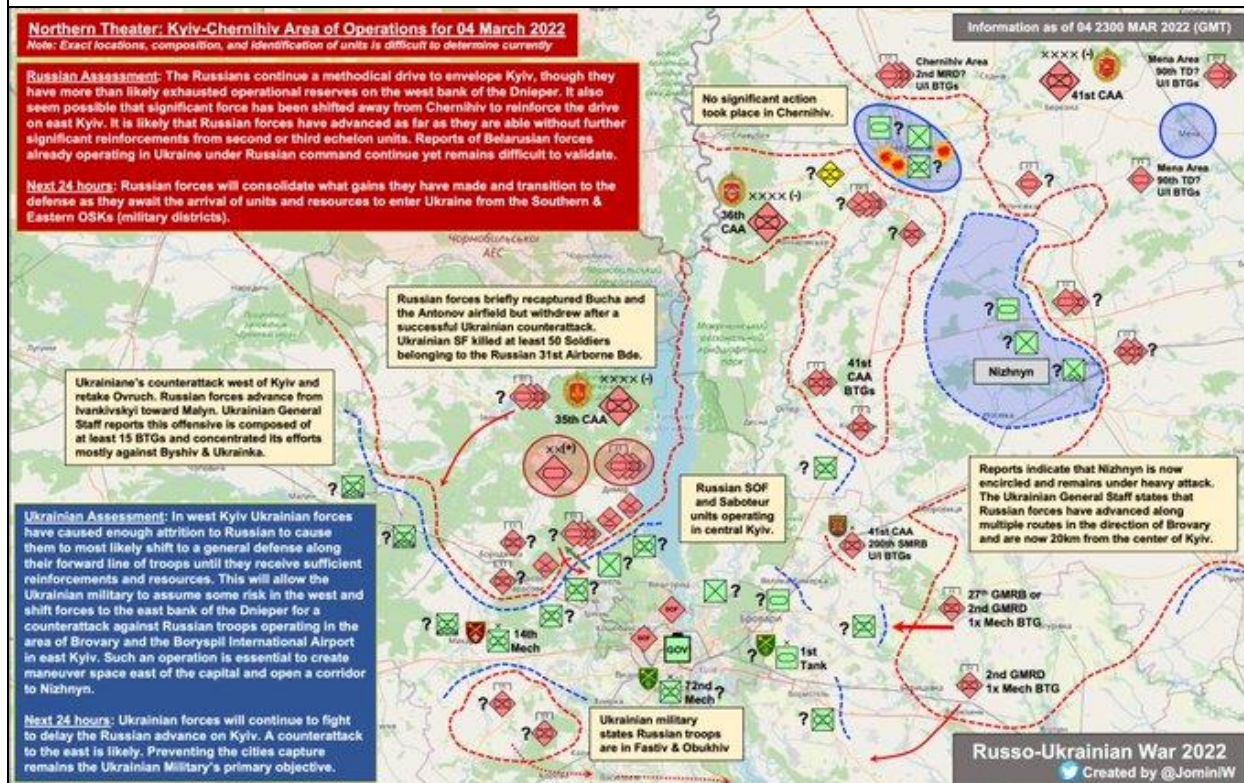
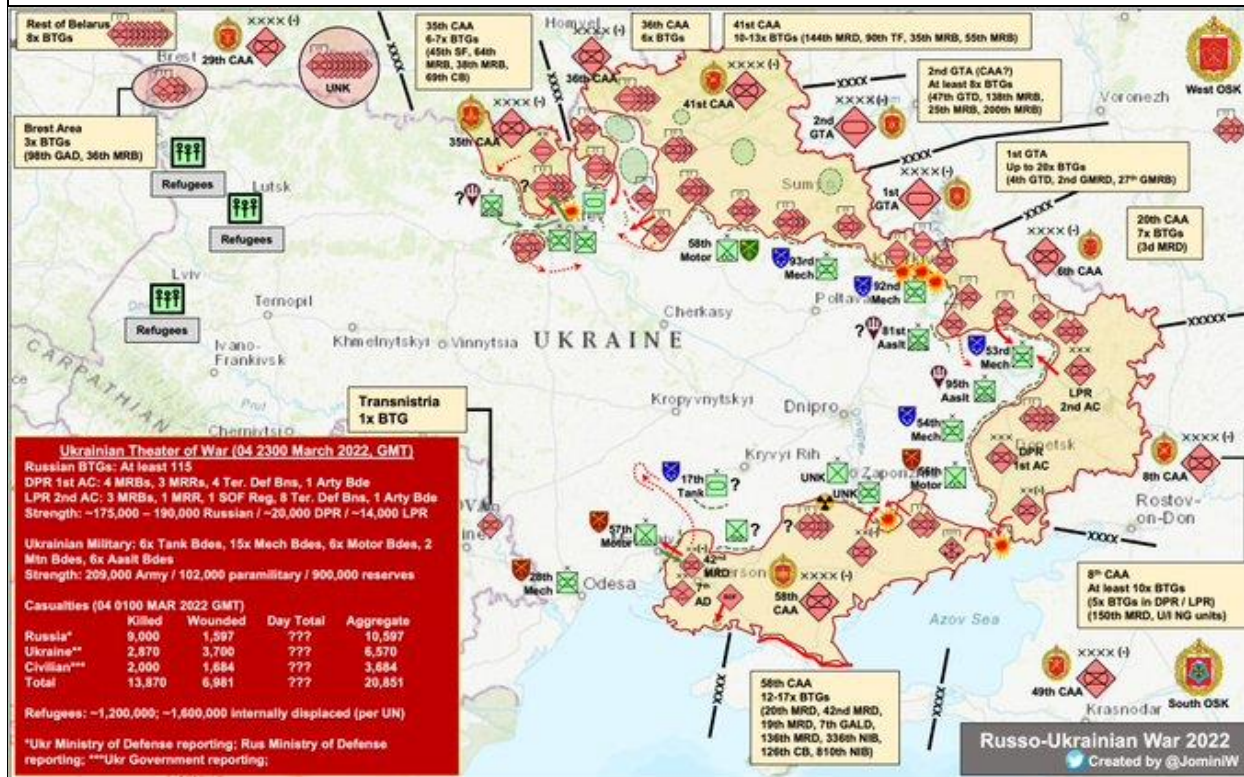
Ukraine-Russia Port Situation Map

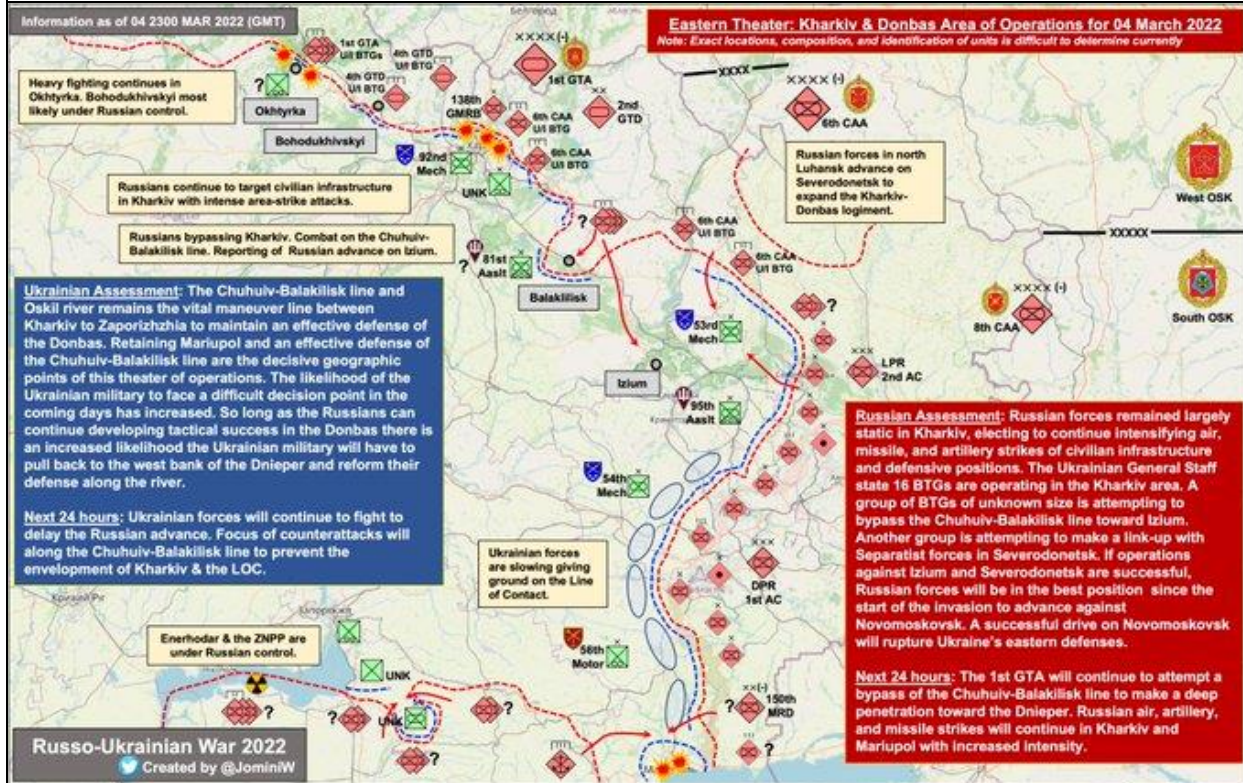
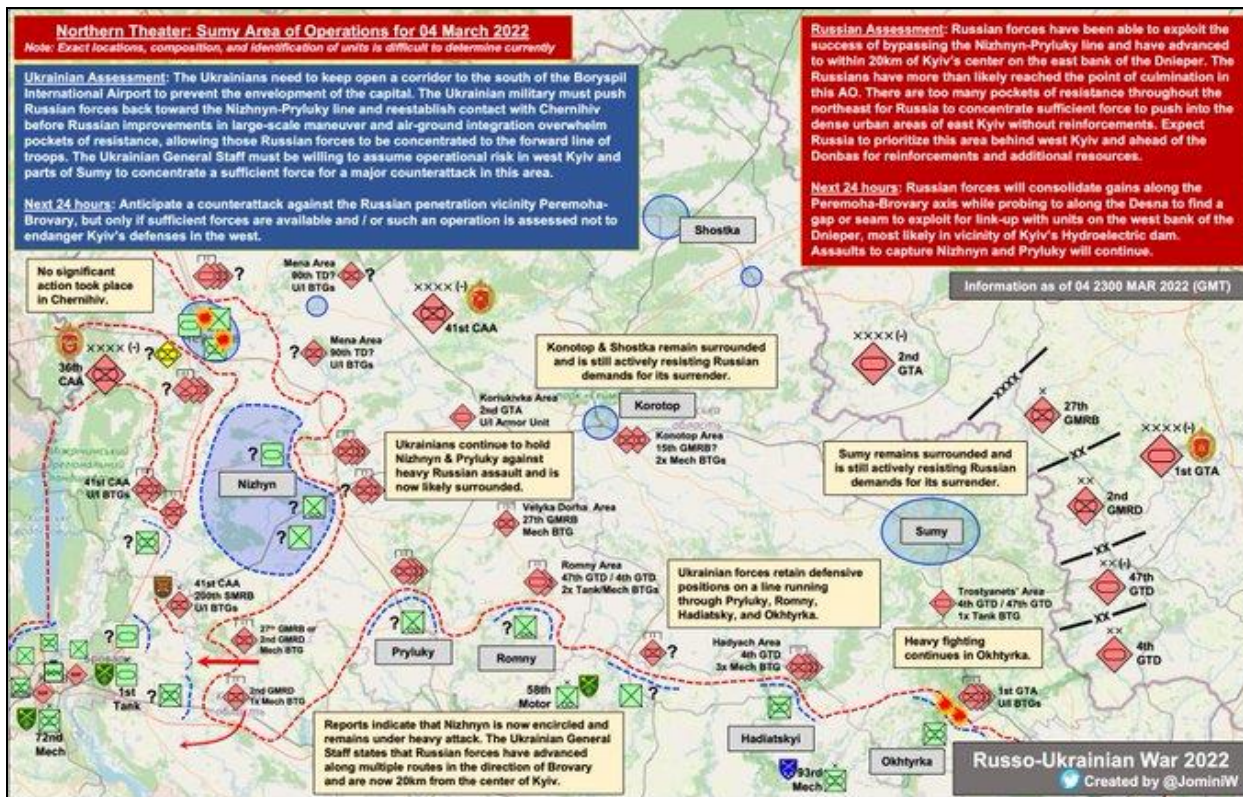
<https://shipmanagementinternational.com/ukraine-news-wilhelmsen-introduces-interactive-ukraine-russia-pot-situation-map/>

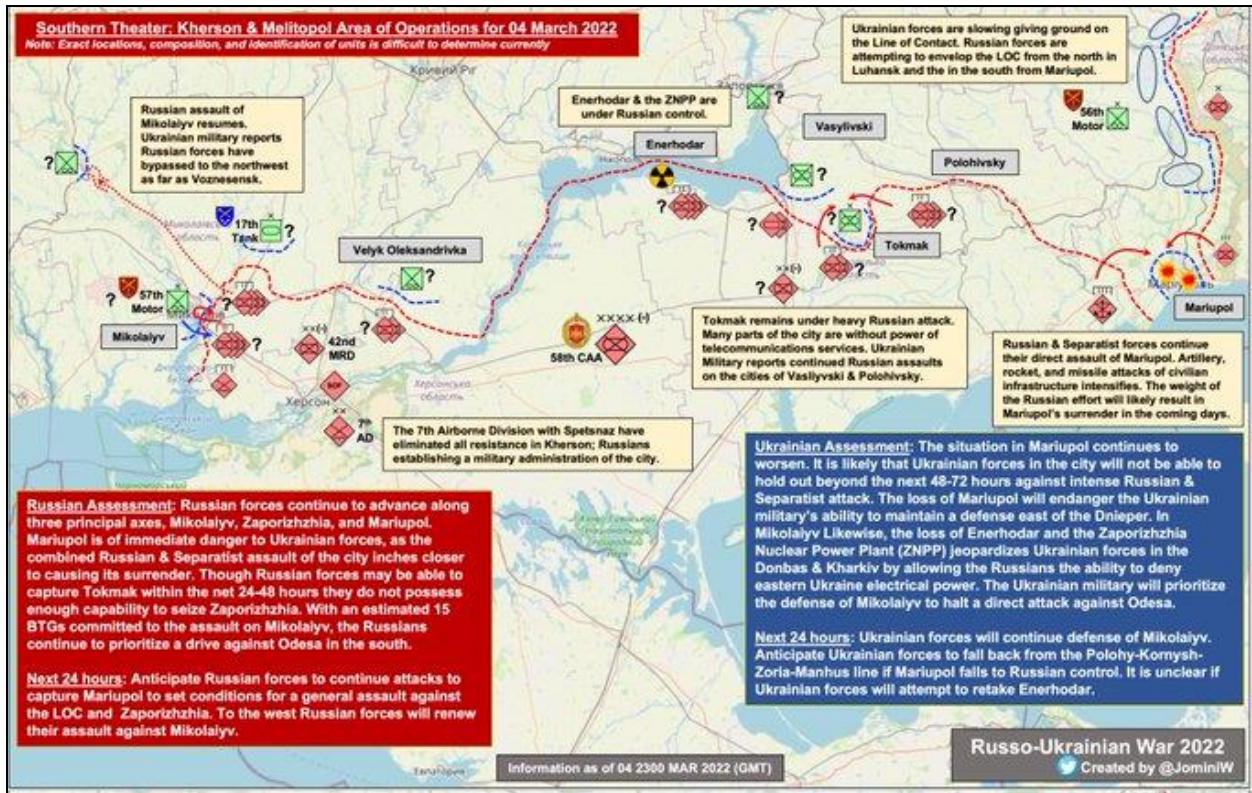
The effects of Ukraine-Russia war extend well beyond the borders of Ukraine, especially when one looks at trade, financial and cyber activities. The Wilhelmsen Ships Service has introduced a map colour coded to identify locations in the Black Sea which do not allow for port calls, allow for port calls with conditions/restrictions, and which are open as usual.



Interesting analysis of the Ukraine-Russia war:







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In-person Maritime Affairs Luncheon

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Vice Admiral Craig Baines
Commander of the Royal Canadian Navy

Thursday, March 24th, 2022
11:30-1:30

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Second Floor (Rockcliffe Room)

Please RSVP to Catherine at cmarch@navyleague.ca by
Monday, March 21st, 2022

