



Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia

Dispatches

26 August 2022

The Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia provides a forum for the study, promotion and debate of defence, security and safety 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.

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Events:

To list an event in *Dispatches*, email RUSI(NS) by noon Thursday. RUSI(NS) events are by invitation. If you are interested in attending and have not been invited, email RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com. RUSI(NS) events may be cancelled at short notice – email RUSI(NS) if there is a question of an event occurring.

9 September, Friday - Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies will host Dr Daniel Moore for a discussion "Understanding Offensive Cyber Operations." 1300-1400 BST. See: <https://rusi.org/events/open-to-all/understanding-offensive-cyber-operations>

emended: 14 September, Wednesday – RUSI(NS) Distinguished Speaker Lieutenant-Colonel Julien Letarte, Royal Canadian Air Force, speaking about the RCAF's Remotely Piloted Aircraft System; and Major Drew Larned, United States Air Force, speaking about US uncrewed aerial vehicle programs. 1300-1500 ADT. Via Zoom. Registration is required. To register, email RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com by close-of-business Sun, 11 Sep. As the subject line for your registration email, put: RUSI(NS) Distinguished Speaker 14 September 2022 Registration. 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. This event is on a second Wednesday of the month, not our normal third.

Advance reading: Canadian Defence Academy Theme Portal - Uncrewed Aircraft Systems <https://cfc-ca.libguides.com/c.php?g=709488&p=5055081&preview=8d01d4c58cd1fa4b02bc759f34e935be>

Also see: Team SkyGuardian Canada <https://www.ga-asi.com/teamskyguardiancanada/>

4 October, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation "Naval War College: Educational Wargaming." 6-8:30pm EDT. Online. To register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/naval-war-college-educational-wargaming-tickets-354893725687>

27 October, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation "Back to the Future: The 1980s Global War Games as a Campaign of Learning." 1800-2000 EDT. Online. To register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/back-to-the-future-the-1980s-global-war-games-as-a-campaign-of-learning-tickets-358240826957>

Publications:

Publications without links are available on request to RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com.

New: RUSI(NS) Information Note "Naming and Dedication of Canadian Coast Guard Ships", 23 August 2022

<https://rusi-ns.ca/naming-dedication-canadian-coast-guard-ships/>

Canadian Marine Industries and Shipbuilding Association On Watch, 17 August 2022

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

Edmonton United Services Institute President's Enews, July 2022

New: Military Institute of Windsor Communiqué, Volume XL, Number 8, September 2022

Naval Association of Canada Starshell, Summer 2022, Issue 95

Royal Alberta United Services Institute Dispatches, August 2022

<https://www.rausi.ca/component/acym/archive/146-rausi-dispatches-august-2022>

Royal Canadian Naval Association Admiral Hose Branch Scuttlebutt, June 2022 Edition

New: Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (Australia) Defence Update, Volume 14, Issue 1, 22 August 2022

Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (Australia) Quarterly Newsletter, Volume 21, Issue 2, June 2022

Seatimes, the Newsletter of the Nautical Professional Education Society of Canada, August 2022

Veterans Affairs Canada Salute! August 2022

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-vac/news-media/salute/2022-08>

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.

NSIRACanada @nsiracanada 17 Aug tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: Unimpeded access to information in a timely way is critical to review. The following principles highlight NSIRA's expectations. Click here to read the document <https://nsira-ossnr.gc.ca/expectations-for-responsiveness-in-reviews>.

(National Security and Intelligence Review Agency - Expectations for Responsiveness in Reviews)



Modern War Institute @WarInstitute 19 Aug tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: "To the degree that there has been any exceptionalism inherent to the Arctic, this was not due to political restraint or mutual agreement, but rather because it's really difficult to conduct operations in the northernmost region of the globe."

(Melting the Myth of Arctic Exceptionalism


<https://mwi.usma.edu/melting-the-myth-of-arctic-exceptionalism/>)



RUSI @RUSI_org 23 Aug tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: Russia's capacity to sustain a longer conflict against Ukraine depends on whether it is given enough time to conserve its existing resources, given its limited ability to replace human and material capabilities at scale, writes Dr Sidharth Kaushal. (Can Russia Continue to Fight a Long War?

<https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/can-russia-continue-fight-long-war>)



Canadian Coast Guard @CoastGuardCAN 25 Aug tweeted: Today, we dedicated the CCGS Jean Goodwill into service! It's the second of 3 medium interim icebreakers to join our fleet. Thanks to the #NationalShipbuildingStrategy, our personnel have the ships they need to continue to deliver critical services to . <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-coast-guard/news/2022/08/the-canadian-coast-guard-dedicates-its-latest-icebreaker-into-service6.html>

(The Canadian Coast Guard Dedicates its Latest Icebreaker into Service)

RUSI(NS) retweeted: RUSI(NS) Information Note "Naming and Dedication of Canadian Coast Guard Ships" <https://rusi-ns.ca/naming-dedication-canadian-coast-guard-ships/>

Welcome to service JEAN GOODWILL



Humour as a Weapon (#information operations)

This images was part of a serious plea for western states to stop supplying Russia (okay, the tweet called Russia 'Mordor') with technology to build weapons went with this picture.

One wonders (hopes? expects?) that intelligence and industry staffs are analyzing origin/supply chains of foreign products for vulnerabilities to sanction. And of our own products for vulnerabilities that weaken us.

Coincidentally this article arose:

National Security Supply Chain Institute

<https://www.rand.org/nsrd/supply-chain-institute.html>



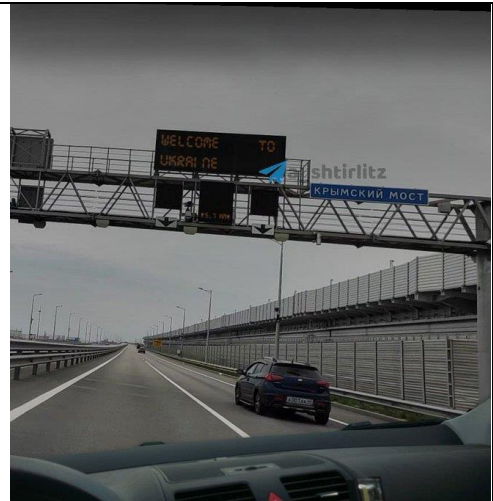
RUSSIAN MISSILE
WITHOUT 31 FOREIGN COMPONENTS

stop exporting technology to russia

Humour as a Weapon (#information operations)

UkraineWorld @ukraine_world 20 Aug tweeted (https://twitter.com/ukraine_world/status/1560975623656542208): Ukrainian hackers hacked the roadside displays on the Crimean Bridge, reminding all russians crossing it that #CrimeaIsUkraine

It doesn't matter whether the display was truly hacked or not (and, what with the display words being in English, the tweet photo could be a simple fabrication), the point is in the posting's message. Certainly the replies indicate the message was on target.



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.

The art and science of intelligence in war

<https://engelsbergideas.com/essays/the-art-and-science-of-intelligence-in-war/>

"Intelligence in war is as much an art as a science, as much a product of common sense as of technical brilliance. Wrong questions and false assumptions are just as likely to produce errors in the application of intelligence today as they were in the past."



A secret no more: Canada's 1st codebreaking unit comes out of the shadows

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/examination-unit-ottawa-1.6543915>

Long overdue recognition.

See also: The Examination Unit National Historic Event (1941–1945)

<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/culture/clmhc-hsmbc/res/information-backgrounder/examen-examination>



"The Examination Unit was Canada's secret civilian cryptographic bureau during the Second World War." "Women made up roughly 40 per cent of the staff."

and

The Examination Unit (1941–1945)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/parks-canada/news/2021/08/the-examination-unit-19411945.html>

There is also a book: "Canada's Bletchley Park: the Examination Unit in Ottawa's Sandy Hill, 1941-1945."

Watch These Guys Cut Up A Ship's Crankshaft Then Re-Forge And Machine It Into Another Crankshaft!

<https://bangshift.com/general-news/tech-stories/watch-these-guys-cut-up-a-ships-crankshaft-then-re-forge-and-machine-it-into-another-crankshaft/>

One kinda wonders whether material from the various Navy and other Canadian government ships that went to the ship breakers ends up as other than scrap metal to be melted and re-used.



Russian invasion of Ukraine forces Arctic defence back onto Canada's agenda

<https://www.nsnews.com/national-news/russian-invasion-of-ukraine-forces-arctic-defence-back-onto-canadas-agenda-5737965>

First time the current Canadian prime minister has been present for Operation NANOOK. "...a changed security situation in the Arctic, where long-standing hopes of settling differences through diplomacy and co-operation now seem much more remote."
"...Canada doesn't really have a choice but to pivot toward a more defensive focus given the importance of the region to its closest allies..."

Operation NANOOK

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/operation-nanook.html>

"Op NANOOK is the Canadian Armed Forces' signature northern operation comprised of a series of comprehensive activities designed to exercise the defence of Canada and to secure our northern regions."



NATO chief tours Arctic defences as Canada comes under pressure to guard the Far North

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/stoltenberg-arctic-trudeau-russia-1.6561950>

"The visit is significant because the Liberal government is facing increased pressure from allies to take more ownership of the defence of its northern approaches."



Other Sources:

#Arctic

When hell freezes over: Russia's Arctic ambitions

<https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/3609219-when-hell-freezes-over-russias-arctic-ambitions/>

#NATO

In the face of Russian aggression, NATO is beefing up Arctic security

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-in-the-face-of-russian-aggression-nato-is-beefing-up-arctic-security/>

#artillery

Boeing, Nammo successfully test new ramjet-powered artillery shell

<https://defence-blog.com/boeing-nammo-successfully-test-new-ramjet-powered-artillery-shell/>

The power of longer-range fire is being proved on the Russia-Ukraine battlefronts.

#Australia

Insights for Canada's forthcoming Defence Policy Update (DPU)?

Defence review warranted but suitability of Stephen Smith questioned as former minister

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/global-conditions-warrant-defence-review-but-choice-of-former-minister-questioned-20220803-p5b6we.html>

Marles's strategic review presents an exploding suitcase of challenges

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/marless-strategic-review-presents-an-exploding-suitcase-of-challenges/>

Marles's Defence Strategic Review—an exploding suitcase of challenges to resolve by March 2023

<https://www.aspi.org.au/report/marles-defence-strategic-review>

Defence review won't succeed unless sacred cows are put up for slaughter

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/defence-review-wont-succeed-unless-sacred-cows-are-put-up-for-slaughter/>

#Canadian Armed Forces

Canadian military breaks with tradition, changes dress codes

<https://legionmagazine.com/en/2022/07/canadian-military-breaks-with-tradition-changes-dress-codes/>

#command and control

Balancing C2 Resilience

<https://wavellroom.com/2021/02/17/balancing-c2-resilience/>

#culture

Why the British Army Needs a Combatives System

<https://wavellroom.com/2018/02/09/why-the-british-army-needs-a-combatives-system/>

#emergency management

A Call for National Standards for Fatality Management

<https://security.frontline.online/article/2021/1/19488-A-Call-for-National-Standards-for-Fatality-Management>

The NS Chief Medical Examiner has invited RUSI(NS) to tour the Dr William D Finn Centre for Forensic Medicine, Burnside, Dartmouth. The tour has been placed into the RUSI(NS) program with a date to be determined.

Mortuary Affairs is a military logistics function. Doesn't get much visibility.

Enhance your Security Environment

<https://security.frontline.online/article/2021/1/19074-Enhance-your-Security-Environment>

"A basic understanding of the concepts and training of the emergency management world can be a tremendous asset to the security specialist tasked with emergency planning and response."

#Indo-Pacific

How Beijing Is Changing Its Rules Around Taiwan

<https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2022/08/how-beijing-changing-its-rules-around-taiwan/375902/>

Implications of a Coercive Quarantine of Taiwan by the People's Republic of China

https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1279-1.html

#wargaming

Taiwan Wargame Simulations Could Exacerbate U.S. Strategic Miscalculation

<https://uscnpm.org/2022/08/19/taiwan-wargame-simulations-could-exacerbate-us-strategic-miscalculation/>

#Russia-Ukraine War

Russia's Repeat Failures

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/russia-repeat-failures>

Sensing Russian Stall, US Rushing Arms to Help Retake Ukrainian Territory

<https://www.defenseone.com/threats/2022/08/more-ukraine-weaps/376080/>

A Russian casualties analysis

<https://threadreaderapp.com/thread/1561133597779791872.html>

A form of medical intelligence? (BDA to those who recall the term.)

Why Kyiv's 'thousand bee sting' strategy is costing Russia dearly

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/08/17/ukraine-indirect-approach-hitting-russians-war/>

What is blowing up those Russian bases in Crimea?

<https://breakingdefense.com/2022/08/what-is-blowing-up-those-russian-bases-in-crimea/>

Ships Lost, Damaged Or Seized During The Russian Invasion of Ukraine

<https://turkishnavy.net/2022/08/24/ships-lost-damaged-or-seized-during-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine-part-3/>

OSINT comes in many forms.

Six months, twenty-three lessons: What the world has learned from Russia's war in Ukraine

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/six-months-twenty-three-lessons-what-the-world-has-learned-from-russias-war-in-ukraine/>

Note: "Lesson for wartime strategic communications: Influence operations are a day-in, day-out job"

#airpower

Air war in Ukraine: the problem of Diagoras

<https://lerubicon.org/publication/guerre-aerienne-en-ukraine-le-probleme-de-diagoras/>

#economic warfare

Technology Controls Can Strangle Russia—Just Like the Soviet Union

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/08/22/russia-ukraine-war-sanctions-export-controls-technology-transfer-semiconductors-defense-industry-military-espionage/>

#information operations

Celebrities and TikTok: Inside Ukraine's 21st century war

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/d3869a74-1af6-11ed-98b9-ae8775f5f43c?shareToken=f7de20c9c4247eddfa2416449ee704c2>

The paper version of The Times actually had the headline "In modern warfare, good PR is a matter of life or death". Mixing the terms (and meanings) PR and IO. But then, some of us believe there is. (There could be an argument that the article is about PA.)

The head of GCHQ says Vladimir Putin is losing the information war in Ukraine

<https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2022/08/18/the-head-of-gchq-says-vladimir-putin-is-losing-the-information-war-in-ukraine>

Russian Tourist Reveals Location of Air Defense Base

<https://sofrep.com/news/russian-tourist-reveals-location-of-air-defense-base/>

A different type of crowd-sourcing...

#technology

Mundane but Meaningful: Understanding the Consequential Ways Digital Technology is Changing Basic Wartime Tasks

<https://mwi.usma.edu/mundane-but-meaningful-understanding-the-consequential-ways-digital-technology-is-changing-basic-wartime-tasks/>

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- The last week has seen only minimal changes in territorial control along the front line. In the Donbas, after small advances from early August, Russian forces have approached the outskirts of the town of Bakhmut, but have not yet broken into the built-up area. Russia has not made any major efforts to advance in the Zaporizhzhia or Kharkiv sectors.
- In the south-west, neither Ukrainian nor Russian forces have made advances on the Kherson front line. However, increasingly frequent explosions behind Russian lines are probably stressing Russian logistics and air basing in the south.
- It is unlikely that the situation will significantly change in the next week. Russian forces are, for now, probably only prepared to undertake limited local assaults, rarely involving more than a company of troops. However, over the coming months the initiative will go to whichever side manages to generate a credible, committed force for offensive operations.

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- Since the start of the invasion Igor Girkin, a Russian hard-liner and formerly an FSB officer and minister in the self-declared Donetsk People's Republic, has become an increasingly outspoken critic of the Kremlin's handling of the war in Ukraine.
- On 19 August 2022, Girkin posted a grudgingly admiring critique of President Zelenskyy's conduct during the war. He contrasted this with Russia's situation where, '...at the end of the sixth month of the war...as before [we] play tank biathlons and hold festivals of military bands'.
- The tank biathlon is the high-profile culminating event of Russia's International Army Games which, as in normal years, took place near Moscow last week. A significant proportion of Russia's military and security professionals probably believe that it is inappropriate to continue committing forces to peace-time military ceremonial events while Russian troops continue to suffer heavy casualties in Ukraine.

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- Over the weekend, Russia probably started moving barges into position to construct a substantial floating bridge over the Dnipro river, immediately beside the damaged Antonivsky road bridge. The crossing is the key link between Russian-occupied Kherson and the east.
- For several weeks, Russian forces and local civilians have relied on a ferry crossing of the waterway. If Russia completes the improvised bridge, it will almost certainly increase the capacity of the crossing point compared to the ferry.
- A floating bridge would likely still be vulnerable to Ukrainian offensive action.



CANADIAN FORCES INTELLIGENCE COMMAND
COMMANDEMENT DU RENSEIGNEMENT DES FORCES CANADIENNES

RUSSIA'S CLAIM:

Russia's Minister of Defence claims that the slowing pace of its "special military operation" is deliberate and that the slow-down is an effort to minimize civilian casualties.

BASED ON CANADIAN FORCES INTELLIGENCE COMMAND ANALYSIS:

- Losses over the past six months have severely degraded Russian ground forces. Russia is very likely consolidating depleted units and deploying insufficiently trained personnel to key combat roles.
- Ukrainian strikes against Russian supply depots, command posts, and logistics elements have significantly degraded Russia's ability to sustain a high operational tempo.
- Russian forces have been forced to seek incremental gains by launching smaller-scale, simpler operations. Russia's overall offensive momentum has been stalled for weeks.
- At the same time, Russia continues to demonstrate minimal regard for civilian casualties by conducting persistent long-range attacks against Ukrainian urban centres, including those far from the frontlines.

UKRAINE / RUSSIA UPDATE // 2022-08-25



National
Defence /
Défense
nationale

#space (wasn't sure how to tag this - #security? #threat analysis? defence policy?)

Congress implies UFOs have non-human origins

<https://thehill.com/opinion/3610916-congress-implies-ufos-have-non-human-origins/>

One of our members contributed this with the observation that 'trans-medium threats' need to be included. The member's words: "This was an oddly interesting piece, containing as it does the recent recognition by the US Congress that UFO and their undersea phenomena kin may in fact well be of extra-terrestrial origin and not man-made... And of course we also know that the Romulan Empire's birds of prey starships were the first to employ practical, working cloaking devices."

#strategy

The Fortress of Broken Dreams: Strategic Lessons of Dien Bien Phu

<https://wavellroom.com/2021/09/10/the-fortress-of-broken-dreams-dien-bien-phu/>

"What does France's defeat at Dien Bien Phu tell us about modern strategy? It's best not to wage war with someone else's resources."

There is a current applicability to those words.

#war

The future of war: embrace the new, remember the old

<https://engelsbergideas.com/books/the-future-of-war-embrace-the-new-remember-the-old/>

Human behaviour will still determine who wins wars

<https://engelsbergideas.com/notebook/human-behaviour-will-still-determine-who-wins-wars/>

#warfare

Rethinking How the United States Trains Foreign Militaries

<https://www.lawfareblog.com/rethinking-how-united-states-trains-foreign-militaries>

#naval warfare

A New DESRON Staff – Beyond the Composite Warfare Commander Concept

<https://cimsec.org/a-new-desron-staff-beyond-the-composite-warfare-commander-concept/>

Other:

Security Affairs Committee Synopsis

O Canada

One can only listen in disbelief at the Mass Casualty Inquiry, especially the very obvious disconnect between the Commissioner of the RCMP, Brenda Lucki and the head of H Division at the time, now retired, Assistant Commissioner Lee Bergerman in regard to at least the appearance of political interference on the part of Minister of Security Bill Blair. There have also been comments about how the RCMP relationships with local police have fallen, indicating a lack of trust between the two types of organizations within the province of Nova Scotia. Sadly, this will cause discussions about whether provinces are getting the best results for money spent on policing. Alberta has decided to raise a new provincial police force as at least a partial solution to come to grips with policing expenses. Interestingly, Nova Scotia used to have a provincial force until the late 1920s, maybe it is time to review this issue for community policing. Maybe the RCMP could be better used to deal with international crime, multi-jurisdictional crimes, espionage, foreign influence issues, racketeering, financial crime, terrorism and other major issues. Maybe provinces should tackle their own community issues and crimes. Just a thought: should we upgrade the RCMP to major criminal efforts and turn them into a highly trained, highly educated policing entity similar in task to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the US. Thoughts?

This week Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholtz came to Canada to ask for liquid natural gas (LNG) for the immediate future. What they got was, well, we're not sure, an untried almost fictional agreement on hydrogen in Newfoundland. Germany has essentially given up on some types of renewable energy such as solar and wind as too little, too unreliable and too much infrastructure. While the technology is coming, and I believe it will eventually, the real need is LNG now. Canada has created a situation where Canada's abundant resources have been shut down when most needed. We are failing our allies and consequently effecting the entire free world in a negative way. The situation has changed radically but our government's thinking remains static and unmoving as if totally oblivious to the disaster that is occurring requiring a more rational and effective answer.

The Ottawa *Citizen* published an article by Robert Smol on 24 August 2022 called "Canada's Military Commitments Ebbs while Theirs Grows" in an essay covering how Sweden will make a much better partner than Canada which continues to weaken from lack of planning, coordination, equipment manpower and resources. It is unpleasant reading comparing the two countries; one is a serious country and the other plays at it. Even McKenzie-King understood the threat of the rising authoritarian countries in the late 1930s. Canada never prepares and the price is always paid by Canadian soldiers and not politicians.

One cannot be a little concerned about the Minister of Diversity not knowing that Laith Marouf was a prolific writer of anti-Semitic Twitter rantings was identified as early as 2017 and this was well-known. It is apparent that there is little or no vetting process; this was an easy catch. The issue with this type of program against racism is that they are sabotaged by those with a very different agenda than the original intention especially when it comes to positions on free speech. There are enough organizations in this country trying to shut down discussion by rants instead of reason. One suspects this is just the tip of the iceberg.

A Canadian parliamentary committee will be visiting Taiwan shortly and the Chinese embassy was quick to threaten retaliation. Our Prime Minister basically said he doesn't stand in their way but wanted the members of the delegation to understand the fallout. Does this sound like a person defending Canada's rights on the international stage? The answer is no and the Prime Minister should have directed comments to the Chinese embassy, not our parliamentarians.

Australia

Australia has recently had a change in government and a change in Chinese ambassadors as well. The new Ambassador, His excellency, Xiao Qian, gave a speech at the National press conference in Canberra on 10 August 2022. It was called "Strive to Bring China-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Back on the Right Track." The text can be found at the Chinese Embassy site to Australia at link: http://au.china-embassy.gov.cn/engsgdhwfb_1/202208/t20220810_10740111.htm/. The outing was a disaster for China, as Australian reporters called out China's actions on a multitude of issues. The bottom line is that China did not get away with blaming Australia for the current situation in China-Australia relations. They covered everything from Chinese influence operations in Australia, the actions in the South China Sea and other places, and many other areas. The difference between the Albanese government and the Morrison government is virtually seamless. The Australian government pays attention to its intelligence services, they also strive for consistent policy in regard to an adversarial government known for its dishonesty and criminal activity, even its press is well aware of its malign influence in South East Asia. It is good when the public realizes the threat posed by a malignant actor. Too bad Canada doesn't understand the threat but still persists in trying to follow the false hope of access to a large market. Australia has it right, and understands that China is an authoritarian, genocidal state. Canada does not.

The US

The US hit targets, used by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) in Deir Az Zor for attacks against US troops on 15 August when drones were used to hit the US Camp at al-Tanf. The US strike was to stop further threats from elements of the IRGC and those militias sponsored by them. The raid was approved by President Biden. The US still retains a presence in the oil rich province.

The Mar-a-Lago raid fallout continues to cause ripples throughout the US public. Despite all the rhetoric, justice does appear to be conducted in a normal manner with time and effort by law enforcement agencies taking the time to examine material for evidence and properly evaluating it for possible future actions in court. Former President Trump's legal actions have met with little success to date. He is involved in at least six different legal actions against him and his organization. His base however is riled and there have been threats made towards law enforcement agencies and personnel. The US is an interesting place at the moment.

Belarus

Reality is often stranger than fiction at times, but one has to be in awe over Alexander Lukashenko wishing Ukraine a happy independence day (24 August 2022), especially in light of Belarus providing a staging area for Russia early in the war and the ongoing partial occupation of Belarus by Russian troops estimated to be around 15k. One wonders what he will do next.

Russia-Ukraine War

The war is said to be a stalemate by some with very little movement by either side. It is certainly a war of attrition with both sides taking severe losses although Russia seems to be taking more at the

moment. Artillery is the major player on the battle field at present but also field engineers digging, repairing and building across the battlefield with yet another new element, the drone operators who operate day and night, sometimes raining high explosives on to unsuspecting soldiers. Ukraine appears to be using its infantry and armour carefully and with forethought, no rash attacks against fortified positions. What Ukraine has been doing is preparing the battlefield for their next moves. They have taken impressive steps in psychological warfare and are lowering enemy morale not by destroying material but by ensuring no Russian feels entirely safe. They have also forced the Russians to move troops to the south due to an imminent Ukrainian attack, true more in rumour than fact. It has taken pressure off the eastern sector and the north around Kharkiv. Russia continues to react to Ukraine now on a daily basis where once Ukraine's army danced to Russian moves. Ukraine will continue to hit major targets such as headquarters, communications nodes, ammunition and supply points, workshops and large bivouac sites on a regular basis. They also keep saying a counter-attack is coming while actually training troops yet forcing the Russians into a defensive posture. It is not a stalemate, it is preparation, which is very different.

More than 60% of the Russian government's revenue comes from oil and gas sales with the vast majority of sales coming from Europe. Europe is making a huge effort to try to minimize their purchase of Russian oil and gas as a measure to help punish Russia for its unprovoked attack on Ukraine. Sanctions were imposed by the West and others on Russia, organizations and individuals. More than 1200 foreign companies have left Russia coupled with loss of access to Western parts and instruments, more than 5m Russians have so far lost their jobs as a result. The link to the Yale paper titled "Business Retreats and Sanctions are Crippling the Russian Economy" is found at link: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4167193, a total of 118 pages. It can be downloaded - the link will take one to the abstract and one can get a download of the full paper from the site. If I were a Russian, I would be very, very worried. The paper also goes on to explain why Russia's pivot to India and China will be a minor improvement. Most of Russia's infrastructure is oriented towards providing Europe with Russian gas and oil, not China or India. Russia lacks the ships to replace the oil and gas pipelines due to sanctions and just simply there are not enough ships.

China

The Chinese economy has suffered this year in ways that are not entirely clear to the West and in some ways not clear even to the leadership in Beijing. What is increasingly clear is that official figures provided have very little to do with reality as it pertains to the rest of the world. The problem is what is the actual real state of the Chinese economy and how much jiggling of the figures is being done at various levels of the Chinese Communist Party to "meet" the expectations of the national leadership. It isn't clear at all, and hopeful comments by certain elements of the Western press still accept the "official" figures at face value when perhaps they are at best misleading if not an outright fabrication of the worst order. In the most recent expectations of Chinese growth, it is suspected that growth will be between 2.8 and 3.3% for the year and not the centrally imposed, planned figure of 5.5%. Some South Asian financial press actually expect an actual negative growth this year and there may be considerable reason to believe this may possibly be true.

China has seen a major downturn in their large property development industry, which has been discussed before - more recently it has also seen the Henan Bank of China stop allowing withdrawals from personal accounts because the money was not there to provide to customers. This led initially to a run on the bank followed by major demonstrations and a crackdown on demonstrations by the police and army despite the fact that the bank had more or less taken peoples' money. This has had a knock on effect on other banks as more people lost confidence in the financial system. A mortgage boycott ensued as well as more and more people simply stopped paying mortgages on apartments and houses that were in fact not built. This is not resolved and is a growing problem. The CCP answer was to spend more money on questionable developments to boost the appearance of growth when in fact they

were spending more money on unnecessary developments. It is essentially pouring more money after bad or as we used to say in the army reinforcing failure.

The latest problem is of no fault of the CCP as such although questionable dam building projects have not helped. The weather has not cooperated and China has been hit with a massive heat wave in the south whilst at the same time coastal provinces were hit by massive flooding. Unfortunately, one of the provinces most effected by the drought is Sichuan province, responsible for about 70% of hydroelectric production. The national government has control and not the province of water use. This has resulted in reservoirs being used early thus there is not enough water for power production. On top of everything else, a key element in power production is not fully available - as of today it is producing about 50% of normal production. Major industries such as Tesla have shutdown. China therefore is seeing wide spread outages and brownouts as a result throughout the country. This is not likely to improve in the near term. Don't forget sanctions either which continues to have an effect on Chinese manufacturing. This will impact global supply chains negatively.

On another issue, the Beidaihe conference is now over a little over a week ago. The person being seen is not president Xi but rather Premier Li Keqiang, the number two man. His message is oriented towards a stronger economy and not the severe lockdowns preferred by Xi. He was also recently seen at the birth place of former President Deng which was widely viewed. It seems strange that Xi is so quiet at this point and allowing Li to have such a high profile offering a different message of opening up China and its economy, far cry from Xi's closed economy and self-sustaining approach advocated this last couple years. Is there a change in the offing or is there another candidate for party leadership? This is unknown but it needs more study.