



Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia Dispatches 7 April 2023

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 Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia, the Department of National Defence or other government department, the Canadian Armed Forces, or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or other agency.

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).

Defence Policy Review

The Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces have opened public consultations to all Canadians on the defence policy review. The review (a.k.a. Defence Policy Update – DPU) has been a topic of discussion in the RUSI(NS) Security Affairs Committee (SAC) for many months. It appears that comments from individuals rather than organizations is the approach being taken for the review, though there is an opportunity to list the organization of choice in a submission. Members of RUSI(NS) and other readers of *Dispatches* are encouraged to make a submission. See the text box at the beginning of the Other section to the 10 March edition of *Dispatches*. Note the **closing date of 30 April 2023**.

It is easier to write answers to the review's questions on a separate document rather than filling in the boxes on the review webpage (<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/canada-defence-policy/we-want-to-hear-from-you.html>). The SAC has copied the questions onto a document and can provide that to anyone to assist with their submission. Email RUSI(NS) for a copy.

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.

12 April, Wednesday - RUSI(NS) Distinguished Speaker Rear-Admiral Santarpia, "Reflections of a Naval Commander." 1300-1500. Ballroom, Wardroom.

18 April, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation by Colin Marston, UK Defence Wargaming Centre, and Graham Longley-Brown, lead author for the MOD Wargaming Handbook, titled "Influence Wargaming Handbook." 1200-1400 EDT. Online. To register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/influence-wargaming-handbook-tickets-524664865737>

19 April, Wednesday - Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (UK) webinar "Assessing the Chinese People's Liberation Army's Personnel" 1430-1530 BST. Online. To register: <https://rusi.org/events/open-to-all/assessing-chinese-peoples-liberation-armys-personnel>

25 April, Tuesday - Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (UK) webinar "Cyber Operations in Ukraine: A Conversation with Victor Zhora." 1400-1500 BST. To register: <https://rusi.org/events/open-to-all/cyber-operations-ukraine-conversation-victor-zhora>

9 May, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation "Scenario Design, or How I ruined my perfect wargame with a sloppy scenario." 1900-2100 ADT. Via Zoom. To register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/scenario-design-or-how-i-ruined-my-perfect-wargame-with-a-sloppy-scenario-tickets-581291246767>

16 May, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation "The Politics of Play: Wargaming with the US Military." Noon-1400 EST. Online. To register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-politics-of-play-wargaming-with-the-us-military-tickets-415461174557>

24 May, Wednesday - RUSI(NS) Distinguished Speaker Brigadier-General Masson. 1300-1500. Royal Artillery Park Officers' Mess. MTF.

13 June, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation "Influence Wargaming Handbook." 1200-1400 EDT. Online To register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/influence-wargaming-handbook-tickets-524664865737>

Publications:

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

New: RUSI(NS) Comments "Mental Health of Police, Military and Security" by Jay Heisler, 4 April 2023
https://rusi-ns.ca/mental_health/

RUSI(NS) History & Heritage Note "Naming Tanks in the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps" by John Boileau, 13 March February 2023,
https://rusi-ns.ca/naming_tanks/

RUSI(NS) Presentation "Canadian Armed Forces/Department of National Defence Space" by BGen Mike Adamson, 15 February 2023,
<https://rusi-ns.ca/caf-dnd-space/>

RUSI(NS) History & Heritage Note "Canadian Pacific Railway's 'Support Our Troops' Locomotives" by Adam Meeks, 7 February 2023,
<https://rusi-ns.ca/locomotives/>

RUSI(NS) Information Note "Types of Royal Canadian Navy Combatant Warships," 30 January 2023,
<https://rusi-ns.ca/types-of-rcn-combatant-warships/>

Canadian Marine Industries and Shipbuilding Association *On Watch*, 29 March 2023
<https://www.cmisa.ca/cpages/on-watch-current>

Canadian Marine Industries and Shipbuilding Association Technical Information webpage
<https://www.cmisa.ca/cpages/technical-information>

Company of Master Mariners of Canada Maritimes Division *Foghorn*, March 2023

Edmonton United Services Institute President's *Enews*, February 2023

New: Military Institute of Windsor *Communiqué*, Volume XLI, Number 4, April 2023

Royal Alberta United Services Institute *Dispatches*, March 2023
<https://rausi.ca/component/acym/archive/187-rausi-dispatches-march-2023>

Royal Alberta United Services Institute presentation by Cmdre Pat Montgomery "Canada's Naval Reserve: Past, Present, and Future," 20 January 2023,
<https://www.rausi.ca/info-events/lunch-and-learn/562-canada-a-naval-reserve-past-present-and-future>

New: Royal Canadian Naval Association Admiral Hose Branch *Scuttlebutt*, April 2023

Royal Canadian Navy *Your Navy Today* Volume 5 Issue 7
<https://www.canada.ca/en/navy/corporate/navy-news/your-navy-today/volume-5-issue-7.html>

Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies – *Australia Journal*, Volume 74, Number 1, March 2023

Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver Island *Newsletter*, Volume 55, 2nd Quarter 2023.

Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (Australia) *Defence Update*, Volume 17, Issue 6, 27 March February 2023

Veterans Affairs Canada *Salute!* March 2023
<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-vac/news-media/salute/2023-03>

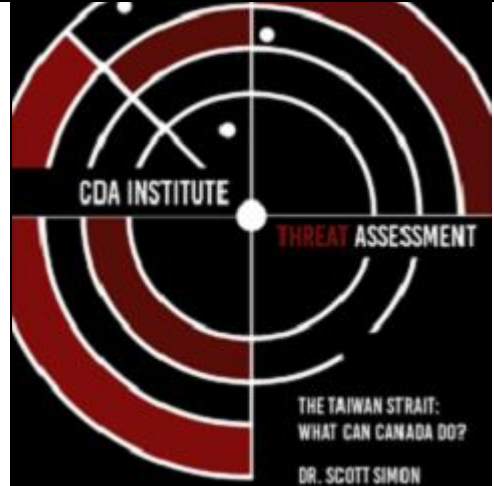
@RUSI NS on Twitter:

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.

RUSI @RUSI_org 29 Mar tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted:
New RUSI Special Report, 'Preliminary Lessons from Russia's Unconventional Operations During the Russo-Ukrainian War, February 2022–February 2023' by @Jack_Watling, Oleksandr V Danylyuk and Nick Reynolds is out now!
(<https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/special-resources/preliminary-lessons-russias-unconventional-operations-during-russo-ukrainian-war-february-2022>)



CDA Institute @CDAInstitute 31 Mar tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: "Canada must make it clear to Canadians that enhanced military presence in the Indo-Pacific is an independent policy choice, to project the goals of the UN Charter and our economic prosperity, not merely taking sides in some great power competition."
 (The Taiwan Strait: What Can Canada Do?
<https://cdainstitute.ca/the-taiwan-strait-what-can-canada-do/>)



"The unsinkable case for buying submarines"
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/editorials/article-the-unsinkable-case-for-buying-submarines/> Yes, CAN 🇨🇦 defence & contribution to allied ops would be considerably enhanced with procurement of new #submarines (item for Defence Policy Review). Subs are very capable, 'strategic assets' <https://www.navalassoc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/BN5-submarines.pdf>



Canadian Armed Forces @CanadianForces 31 Mar tweeted: The Government of Canada has extended #OpPRESENCE until March 31, 2026. Through Op PRESENCE, the #CAF provide high-value military capabilities to United Nations peacekeeping missions. <https://canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2023/03/defence-minister-anita-anand-announces-the-extension-of-operation-presence.html>
 (Defence Minister Anita Anand announces the extension of Operation PRESENCE)
 RUSI(N) retweeted: There are only so many operations CAN 🇨🇦 can/should require of its @CanadianForces especially when people, financial & equipment resources are limited/restrained; everyone should keep that in mind & ensure our gov't prioritizes what we citizens want <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/canada-defence-policy/we-want-to-hear-from-you.html>



RUSI @RUSI_org 30 Mar tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted:: A new @OSIA_RUSI investigation, in partnership with @FT, sheds new light on how North Korea (DPRK) taps into organised criminal networks to evade #sanctions and keep its weapons programme running. (thread https://twitter.com/RUSI_org/status/1641450966561206273)
 (Inside North Korea's oil smuggling: triads, ghost ships and underground banks <https://ig.ft.com/north-korea-oil-smuggling/>)



Quadcopter #drone that can launch & recover fixed-wing longer-range aerial drone
<https://www.defenseone.com/business/2023/04/insitus-new-shipboard-drone-launches-and-catches-other-drones/384710/>
 Empowers small-deck vessels, military & civil, to be "aircraft carriers" or at least carriers of bigger/more capable drones
 #EveryShipAcarrier
 (Insitu's New Shipboard Drone Launches and Catches Other Drones)



🇨🇦 @RCAF_ARC & US 🇺🇸 Space Command sign Enhanced Space Cooperation arrangement
<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/maple-leaf/rcaf/2023/03/rcaf-ussc-sign-enhanced-space-cooperation-arrangement.html> framework for military coop; increase exchange of info; improved coordination of #space requirements; identify potential studies, projects & activities



Fatality Identification

Oryx on Twitter: "For every turret toss or catastrophic detonation, an AFV crew meets its untimely demise. In some instances, pulverized bone fragments is all that remains of the crew. These images give a harrowing insight into the difficult work of identifying these souls. <https://t.co/8vftPKjrtf>" /

There doesn't to be history about mortuary affairs in recent (e.g., 20th century) major wars. MA is not the same as what Sarah Lockyer does in the CAF/DND's Casualty Identification Program (see her brief to us at: https://rusi-ns.ca/casualty_identificaton_program/).



Russian Assault Detachment

Battle Order @battle_order 3 Apr tweeted:
<https://youtu.be/Yy1M0HC4yns> New video examining the Russian Assault Detachment manual that's going around, with some added historical context and why it's not new



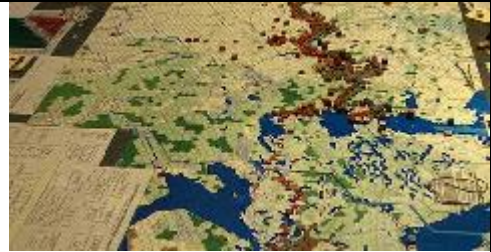
“Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia” on Facebook:

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 RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com.

Wargaming for Strategic Planning

<https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2017/3/29/wargaming-for-strategic-planning>

"Wargaming is not just a planning process step for military staffs but includes a variety of methodologies that are useful in informing strategic decision making and aiding in the development of strategies and contingency plans prior to or during detailed planning."



One wonders how much strategic planning wargaming preceded or will follow the current Canadian defence policy review. Really, any government department should be engaged in such gaming. Is there collaboration between departments? Maybe there should be a Canadian government strategic gaming centre.

Arming Coast Guards

Collin Koh on Twitter 31 Mar 23: "Almost missed in the week's news pile: Taiwan's Executive Yuan passed amendments to the coast guard law that clearly specifies authority to use firearms is vested in the Coast Guard Administration's Director-General. <https://t.co/L6Z7nhjvcb> <https://twitter.com/CollinSLKoh/status/1641987770766999552>"



Considering the increased use of coast guards by western and adversarial states for 'conflict short of war' operations, might (should) Canada be looking at what it would take in laws, equipment, training, etc., to prepare to arm the Canadian Coast Guard if arming became necessary?

Biden's visit to Canada may mark beginning of long decline in relationship with U.S.

<https://financialpost.com/news/economy/joe-biden-visit-mark-decline-canada-relationship-us>

"Even though desperately needed, any boots-on-the-ground mission in Haiti would be a no-end-in-sight and thankless commitment with only political pain and no gain. It is also an untenable domestic political position for any Canadian government and also something that Canada simply lacks the resources to accomplish."



The consequences of Canadian decisions over the decades about investing in defence, trade and other nation building areas are coming back to restrict Canada's foreign policy options and international relations.

Davie Shipyard joins Irving, Seaspan in national shipbuilding program

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/davie-shipyard-joins-national-shipbuilding-program-1.6800866>



"Under the national shipbuilding and procurement strategy, which requires the Canadian Coast Guard to purchase ships from Canadian shipyards, it can only replace one ship a year, at most, "...At that rate, the median age of the fleet will not decrease. Other strategies, such as outsourcing or leasing, are not part of the strategy and thus cannot be deployed to meet short-term requirements."

Yes, looking at the size of the Canadian marine departments large-ship fleets (50-60 ships >1000 tonnes), the nominal life-span of the large ships 30 years), and a nominal time it takes to build one (two years), admittedly, all very rough figures, it appears that Canada needs three shipyards to build and maintain the fleets that this country needs (to the extent that need is apparent outside of government).

Other Sources:

#Canadian Surface Combatant Project

Canadian Surface Combatant Project Land-Based Testing Facility Community Engagement Session 31 January 2023 Unofficial Transcript

<https://tridentnewspaper.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Transcript-LBTF-Public-Engagement-Session-31-January-2023.pdf>

Canadian Surface Combatant Project Land-Based Testing Facility Information

<http://tridentnewspaper.com/LBTF/>

#China #intelligence

China Has Been Waging a Decades-Long, All-Out Spy War

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/03/28/china-has-been-waging-a-decades-long-all-out-spy-war/>

#cyber operations

Secret trove offers rare look into Russian cyberwar ambitions

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/03/30/russian-cyberwarfare-documents-vulkan-files/>

#defence policy

Canada's Department Of National Defence Says It Wants To Hear From Canadians

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/03042023-canadas-department-of-national-defence-says-it-wants-to-hear-from-canadians-oped/>

Eurasia Review picked up RUSI(NS) member Tim Dunne's op-ed from Dimensions. Dimensions is a RUSI(NS) newsheet distributed to anyone who asks to subscribe. If you wish to subscribe, email Tim Dunne admin@duncom.ca.

#information operations

How a tiny company with few rules is making fake images go mainstream

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2023/03/30/midjourney-ai-image-generation-rules/>

#Royal Canadian Navy #A2R

The Royal Canadian Navy introduces a new recruitment opportunity

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2023/03/the-royal-canadian-navy-introduces-a-new-recruitment-opportunity.html>

Innovative, a one-year contract to experience naval occupations before deciding if a career in the Navy is the right fit.

#Russia-Ukraine War

The war in Ukraine shows the game-changing effect of drones depends on the game

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2023.2178180>

The Coming Fight will be Different

<https://mickryan.substack.com/p/the-coming-fight-will-be-different>

Ukraine is now fielding 1940s-era anti-aircraft guns as artillery

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/ukraine-1940s-ks-19-anti-aircraft-gun/>

Maybe there's something to be said for warehousing older armaments...

#artillery

The Russian Army's fallen God of War

<https://wavellroom.com/2023/03/31/russias-god-of-war/>

#warfare

Rethinking remote warfare

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s41311-023-00449-5>

The Tactics Gap: Why We Wrestle With The Basics

<https://www.tjomo.com/article/the-tactics-gap-why-we-wrestle-with-the-basics/>

Other:

Emblem for the Coronation of King Charles III

The Canadian Emblem for the Coronation of King Charles III has been announced by the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The Royal Monogram (CIIR) in the centre of the Emblem and the Royal Crown at the top are personal symbols of The King. The ring of triangular shapes evokes the image of a string of pennants displayed for a celebration. These 13 shapes allude to Canada's provinces and territories, and their circular arrangement conveys the idea of inclusion for all Canadians. The circle is also an important concept for many Indigenous peoples, symbolizing not only equity but also the cycles of the natural world. The green colour of the shapes is associated with the environment, which has long been an important cause for His Majesty, and it symbolizes hope and growth. Inclusion and togetherness are also represented by the white spaces between the green shapes, which resemble paths leading to a central meeting place. The entire white space can be seen as a sunburst, symbolizing innovation and new ideas. The Emblem was designed and painted by Cathy



Sovereign Crown

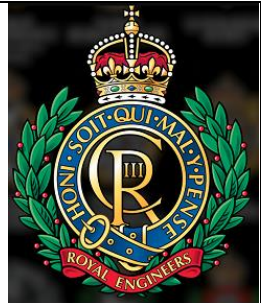
Ed: At this point, there has been no indication known to this editor as to what the intentions are with Canadian badges which currently carry the St Edward's crown as their crest. Feedback 3 Apr 23 from Ottawa indicated the following from 10 Nov 22 is the only news release so far: "Changes in the Monarchy prompt changes in the Canadian Armed Forces"

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/maple-leaf/defence/2022/11/changes-monarchy-canadian-armed-forces.html>

His Majesty The King's Coronation heralds new era for British Army cap badges
<https://www.army.mod.uk/news-and-events/news/2023/03/his-majesty-the-kings-coronation-heralds-new-era-for-british-army-cap-badges/>

His Majesty the King's cypher to be worn during coronation parade
<https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/news-and-latest-activity/news/2023/march/30/230329-kings-cypher-and-crown>

Royal Navy @RoyalNavy 30 Mar 23 tweeted (<https://twitter.com/RoyalNavy/status/1641461810074202115>): The King's cypher will feature on #RoyalNavy and #RoyalMarines uniforms for the first time at His Majesty The King's Coronation. Notably, the Tudor Crown, which appears on the cypher, will appear on #RoyalNavy cap badges.



Royal Canadian Air Force Anniversary



As we celebrate the 99th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) on April 1st, 2023, we reflect on the century of excellence, dedication, and innovation that have defined this remarkable organization. From the earliest days of aviation, the RCAF has been at the forefront of aerospace technology, defending Canadian sovereignty, promoting global peacekeeping, and advancing the interests of our nation.

The RCAF's mottos, "Sic Itur Ad Astra" and "Per Ardua Ad Astra," reflect the core values of this exceptional organization. "Such is the pathway to the stars" speaks to the RCAF's commitment to excellence, innovation, and the pursuit of greatness in all aspects of its mission. "Through Adversity to

the Stars" reminds us that success and achievement can only be reached through hard work, perseverance, and overcoming obstacles.

As we look forward to next year and the 100th anniversary of the RCAF, we are filled with pride and gratitude for the men and women who have served and continue to serve in this exceptional organization. We are grateful for the sacrifices and service of its members, and we look forward to the future with confidence, knowing that the RCAF will continue to play a vital role in defending Canadian sovereignty, supporting global peacekeeping efforts, and advancing aerospace innovation.

To all members of the RCAF, past and present, we extend our deepest appreciation and admiration for your service and sacrifice. Your commitment to excellence and unwavering spirit have not gone unnoticed, and we are proud to call you our own. As we celebrate the RCAF's 99th anniversary, we look forward with anticipation and excitement to the next 100 years of excellence, innovation, and service to Canada. Happy 99th anniversary, RCAF, and here's to an even more remarkable century to come!

All the best to everyone and Happy Birthday to the RCAF.

Editor: How long before/if Canada changes from the St Edward's Crown to the Tudor crown as the crest for organization/unit badges?

See: His Majesty The King's Coronation heralds new era for British Army cap badges

<https://www.army.mod.uk/news-and-events/news/2023/03/his-majesty-the-kings-coronation-heralds-new-era-for-british-army-cap-badges/>

Royal Canadian Air Force birthday video "Happy birthday to us!"

<https://fb.watch/jE6zTr54ID/?mibextid=qC1gEa>

Royal Canadian Navy Naval Experience Program

<https://www.canada.ca/en/navy/nep.html>

"The Naval Experience Program (NEP) will provide you with enough exposure to life in the Navy to decide if it is right for you.

Following an accelerated enrollment, eight week basic military training and four week naval training, you will join the fleet on either the East or West coast. Over the course of several months, you will learn the ropes of being a sailor by shadowing a variety of jobs and gaining exposure to a number of skills. The program culminates with a going to sea portion, so you can get a sense of the adventure found in a naval career."

Security Affairs Committee Synopsis

O Canada

The federal budget was presented to Canadian citizens last week. There was 43B CAD in new spending mainly on short term programs to assist with the fallout from previous programs that caused high inflation that affected lower income families. The other area of growth were the green programs needed to change the country's energy reliance from fossil fuels to greener forms of energy. What was not covered were defence and security programs despite a deteriorating world situation. The defence

policy review is based on individual comments through that lacks critical filters and eliminates groups that are knowledgeable in those areas. It seems that the government is more interested in situating their preferred solution as opposed to actually dealing with the actual issues. Canada has needed major policy reviews in security, foreign policy and defence that are based on a considered study of our actual national interests, none of which have remotely occurred despite the change in world affairs. The budget was high on spending, low on planning and thought.

There are increasing concerns over the recent appointments and a lack of action by the government in dealing with apparently ongoing infiltration actions by the Communist Chinese Party (CCP) in Canada which include Confucius Institutes, "police stations," intimidation actions against Chinese Canadians, political interference at all levels of Canadian politics, espionage especially at Canadian universities, attempts to gain access to Canadian influencers, as well as the very real attacks under the "Three wars Concept" ongoing since 2012 and possibly earlier. CSIS has pointed out that successive Canadian governments have ignored foreign interference since the Mulroney government with little or no action by Canadian governments. One has to wonder what China has to do to be understood as a major adversary? China is an authoritarian, genocidal regime that has killed tens of millions of people, yet we still seem to have blinders on when it comes to the CCP's China.

The Canadian battle group in Latvia is still under-equipped with armour, anti-armour and air defence assets. That Canada is supposed to raise the battle group to a brigade group size in a reasonable time is questionable at best. Canadian troops in Poland are apparently not being fed nor their costs covered. This is a very basic service and should be a well-used and exercised system but it has apparently failed. Not a good look and not a good picture for future recruiting.

After the negatives, some good news. The Canadian government announced that Chantiers Davie would become the third ship building partner in the National Shipbuilding Strategy program. They also announced that Davie would receive contracts for six smaller icebreakers and one polar icebreaker for the Coast Guard. This is good news overall for a change.

Work on the first launch pad for Maritime Launch Services in Canso has started and is well along. They hope to have their first launch in summer 2023. Work on other infrastructure is continuing including roads and other support buildings. NASA also announced the crew of the Artemis II mission to the Moon. Jeremy Hansen, a former RCAF fighter pilot, was selected as part of the first manned mission to the Moon. Congratulations and good luck to him.

The Chief of Defence Staff, General Wayne Eyre, presented a submarine replacement program that will cost between 60 and 100B CAD over the life of the program. Canadians are already concerned over defence programs such as the Canadian Surface Combatant and the Future Fighter Capability projects, both with major increases in costs mainly due to lack of commitment to get programs done on time, on budget. Procurement continues to be less than ideal.

United States

The House Minority leader, Hakeem Jefferies, met with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-Wen as she travelled to South America to meet leaders of countries still recognizing the Republic of China - Taiwan. She is also about to meet the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Kevin McCarthy, in California on 5 April 2023 as she does a short stopover. China as per normal has gone over the top in protests, promising all sorts of retaliation. The local California Chinese Consul-General has stated "as being not conducive to regional peace, security and stability," further stating that "it would undermine the foundation of US-China relations." This is well understood by the US Administration but the US,

although not stating it publicly, will not bend in any manner at any time to how the US conducts its foreign policy. This could get ugly.

The US and the Philippines have concluded in new major defence pact which will see the US have access to four bases in the Philippines. This new deal is in response to China's increasing potentially hostile actions in Philippine waters. China has claimed almost all the South China Sea, something that is recognized by no other country.

Belarus

The recent gathering of key members of the Belarus military and political elite was "interesting." It is increasingly clear that the self-proclaimed leader of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko's arcs of action have been greatly curtailed by Russia. Lukashenko, despite his large number of faults, has sought to maintain a level of independence of action. He has tried hard to maintain a balance between the West, in particular Europe, and the Russian Federation. His self-proclaimed victory in the 2020 elections led to wide-spread protests that the election was marred by corruption. Arrests were wide-spread as well with more than 35k arrested. Putin's support went far to ensure that security forces did not stray from the Lukashenko line.

As mentioned last week, Belarus is receiving Russian tactical nuclear systems and upgrading of Belarus aircraft to carry nuclear weapons plus the stationing of Iskander nuclear equipped missiles under Russian control in Belarus. Some will be stationed next to the Belarus-Ukraine border thus causing concern that they might be used to crush Ukrainian opposition and allow for a Russian victory, pyric though it will be. Would Russia conduct nuclear operations? Doubtful but keep in mind very few figured that Putin would be dumb enough to start the war in the first place, so "all bets are off."

The security services and the military of Belarus have made it quite clear that they will not attack Ukraine and that such an attack would be detrimental to the current leadership. This is also not a good omen. Belarus partisans are continuing attacks on local infrastructure as well. The war is not popular.

Moldova

In a big sign of support, on 3 April 2023 Olaf Shultz pledged Germany's support to the best of their ability against Russia's attempts to destabilize the Moldovan government. The President of Moldova, Maia Sandu, thanked the Chancellor for his support but also recognized that Ukraine's heroes were the first line of defence. In her response she also made it clear that Moldova is a Russian target and needs the support of friends. Moldova was identified in allegedly leaked Russian documents as a target for further Russian moves in Europe. Moldova is just completing an exercise with British and American troops in Moldova.

Moldova's breakaway region of Transnistria has approximately 1800 Russian troops as "peacekeepers" supporting nearly 6k pro-Russian militia covering one of Russia's largest ammunition storage sites. This ammunition is badly needed by Russia as it is increasingly clear that Russia's ability to produce ammunition is limited.

Russia-Ukraine War

There has been little movement by either side in the past week. Russian forces have made some headway in Bakhmut allegedly reaching the town hall. This was the subject of a video by Yevgeny Prigozhin showing through night vision equipment the raising of the Wagner flag along with the Russian flag on the building. The Wagner group has had some success in the local fight. They took

Soledar earlier and have been the main troops fighting in Bakhmut, however at considerable cost because of tactics but also of infighting between Prigozhin and the regular Russian forces. Rumours and that is all they are now is that a new private military company will now get access to Russian prisons to feed the forward units. This company is thought to be owned by Sergei Shoigu, the Russian Defence Minister. It is thought by a number of media outlets that this is retaliation for Wagner's self-serving criticism of the regular forces. This infighting has had a very noticeable effect on Russian success or lack thereof. One can expect that this competition will continue especially as Prigozhin continues to be seen as a potential rival for Putin's chair and as an enemy of the defence establishment.

In a story covered by the Moscow Times and Meduza, a captain in the Russian Federal Protective Service, also known as the FSO, fled the country with his family and was interviewed by Ilya Rozhdestvensky of the Dossier Institute founded by Mikhail Khodorkovsky, an anti-Putin activist and former oligarch, after his safe arrival in Turkey. Captain Gleb Karakulov was a communications engineering officer who had accompanied Putin in his early travels. His main function was to ensure secure communications. He took advantage of travel to arrange his defection. His motivation is that he considers Vladimir Putin a war criminal.

His comments about the President are interesting. He maintains that Putin has changed radically since 2020 and the start of the pandemic. He had become isolated from the mainstream as he sought to remain "healthy" and away from Covid 19. This isolation and quarantining are still ongoing despite the lower risk. He did state that those around Putin have tended to be an echo chamber supporting most of the move against Ukraine. The full version of the interview with Captain Karakulov can be found at: <https://dossier.center/fso-en/>. The interview is fascinating.

The other story is the assassination of Vladlen Tatarsky, killed in St Petersburg allegedly by anti-Russian elements. He apparently was at a gathering to celebrate his accomplishments when a young woman came in with a bust of him to present to him. A security guard stopped her from bringing in the statue, but she was able to convince Mr Tatarsky to ask for his "present" against the wishes and actions of the security guard. He received his "present" at close range, was killed and many were injured including the alleged bomber. Mr Tatarsky was one of the top four Russian military Vloggers. There is suggestions that he was eliminated by a faction that did not like his take on Wagner successes. The restaurant where the explosion took place is associated with the Wagner Group. Most of this is speculation but it is increasingly clear that there is considerable infighting between various groups in Russia. There is also an ongoing series of fires at critical sites around the country that exceeds Ukraine's abilities and capabilities suggesting a more violent anti-Putin movement.

Russian propaganda is now firmly aimed at Poland suggesting that the Poles actually covet Western Ukraine and are keeping the war going to weaken Russia. Apparently Sergey Naryshkin, Chief of the Foreign Intelligence Service, continued to express this view this week in Moscow. Although Poland has been absolutely supporting Ukraine in its ongoing war with Russia it is more Russia's wishful thinking than any actual activity. Naryshkin was once thought to be a potential successor to Putin, although he was publicly admonished when he criticized the option of going to war immediately prior to the 24 February 2022 start of the conflict.

NATO

Finland has officially acceded to NATO membership on Tuesday, 4 April 2023, as the 31st member of the alliance. It was bitter-sweet for Sanna Marin who was defeated in last week's Finnish elections, coming in third. Petteri Orpo is the new Prime Minister-designate. He is from the pro-business National Coalition Party. There is no major change expected in the near term.

Turkiye is scheduled to have national elections on 14 May 2023. The race is more competitive this time as Erdogan is hampered by a weakened economy and his action or lack thereof in support of earthquake rescue and recovery efforts earlier this year. A CNN article by Nadeen Ebrahim on 3 April 2023 suggests that the decision on the president will be very much in the hands of the Kurdish minority who compose 20% of Turkiye's population. Still, President Erdogan has proven to be a wily adversary, and dirty tricks are not out of the question.

The UK started cutting steel on its fourth Type 26 frigate whilst Canada, well, is thinking about thinking of cutting steel in the distant future. Embarrassing.

China

The President of Taiwan, Tsai Ing-Wen, is currently in the US and will be meeting with the current Speaker of the US House of Representatives, Kevin McCarthy, in California late this week. China's Communist Chinese Party has reacted with fiery rhetoric, Whether this turns into something of more consequence, some indication should be seen this week.

There was one media report that suggested that Chinese warships were jamming radio and GPS signals in the South China Sea. The initial report involved Air Qantas aircraft. There was no other media report supporting this activity. Still, is it possible especially given China's claim over these waters. Is it an attempt to gain further leverage over this area from other non-military organizations? It is disturbing if true.

The debt of local (provinces and independent cities) governments is reaching a level that a major effort by the central government will be necessary to prevent financial collapse. Local governments have limited ability to ease the situation in the near term without significant assistance. Local governments are limited to the type of financial tools they can use for the production of revenue. The normal source of revenue or income is by the sale of land to developers. This allows for the creation of infrastructure thus creating opportunities for further taxation of property owners as an example. With the property management crisis, local governments have been unable to utilize this normal revenue stream due to the fallout from property developers' financial failure. The solution by the national government was to put money into further infrastructure, something that is already over-built and of limited use in the longer term without sales. The bottom line according to the author of China Update is the possible collapse of the Chinese economy until this matter is sorted out. China is already dealing with high unemployment, the loss of export deals, decoupling, US sanctions and the migration of multi-nationals to non-Chinese countries which further batter the country and cause greater problems. China's economy is not likely to recover in the short term, longer term is a different question. The current national government seems to be somewhat less than competent in dealing with the economy but the CCP government is more concerned about stability than the economy. Their idea of success is therefore different.

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- As of 23 March 2023, Ukrainian Special Operation Forces released footage of a Russian ZOOPARK-1M counter-battery radar being destroyed in the Donetsk area.
- Efforts by both sides to neutralise their opponents' counter-battery radars have been a constant element of the conflict. These systems are relatively few in number but are a significant force multiplier. They allow commanders to rapidly locate and strike enemy artillery.
- However, because they have an active electromagnetic signature, they are vulnerable to being detected and destroyed. Russia has lost at least six ZOOPARK-1M and likely only has a very limited number left in Ukraine. Regenerating counter-battery radar fleets is likely a key priority for both sides, but Russia will likely struggle because the systems rely on supplies of high-tech electronics which have been disrupted by sanctions.

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- On 11 January 2023, Russian Chief of the General Staff (CGS) General Valery Gerasimov took personal command of the 'special military operation' in Ukraine.
- Gerasimov's tenure has been characterised by an effort to launch a general winter offensive with the aim of extending Russian control over the whole of the Donbas region. Eighty days on, it is increasingly apparent that this project has failed.
- On several axes across the Donbas front, Russian forces have made only marginal gains at the cost of tens of thousands of casualties, largely squandering its temporary advantage in personnel gained from the autumn's 'partial mobilisation'.
- After ten years as CGS, there is a realistic possibility that Gerasimov is pushing the limits of how far Russia's political leadership will tolerate failure.

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- While Russia has suffered up to 200,000 casualties since its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, a significant minority of these have been due to non-combat causes.
- On 27 March 2023, a Russian Telegram news channel reported there have been 'extremely high' numbers of incidents, crimes, and deaths linked to alcohol consumption amongst the deployed Russian forces.
- Other leading causes of non-combat casualties likely include poor weapon handling drills, road traffic accidents and climatic injuries such as hypothermia. Russian commanders likely identify prevalent alcohol abuse as particularly detrimental to combat effectiveness. However, with heavy drinking pervasive across much of Russian society, it has long been seen as a tacitly accepted part of military life, even on combat operations.

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- The Russian MOD is likely running a deliberate information operation to revive the reputation of a brigade which has become synonymous with recent Russian failures in Ukraine.
- Throughout March 2023, the activities of 155th Naval Infantry Brigade were highlighted via some of the most extensive Russian helmet-cam combat footage yet released; a televised visit by a prominent Russian TV host, Vladimir Solovyov; public announcements that the formation is in 'high spirits [with] a strong determination to achieve the set goals'; and images showing the 155th being re-equipped with modified tanks.
- In reality, the 155th has likely been reduced to combat ineffective status at least twice in the last six months, due to being committed to tactically flawed frontal assaults near Vuhledar in Donetsk Oblast. The MOD's effort to revive the brigade's image likely reflects concern about the way in which its failures were being increasingly associated with Russian senior military leaders.

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INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- Russia is likely seeking to sponsor and develop alternative private military companies (PMCs) to eventually replace the Wagner Group PMC in its significant combat role in Ukraine.
- This takes place in the context of the high-profile feud between the Russian Ministry of Defence and Wagner Group. Russia's military leadership likely wants a replacement PMC that it has more control over. However, no other known Russian PMC currently approaches Wagner's size or combat power.
- Russia likely sees continued utility for PMCs in Ukraine because they are less constrained by the limited pay levels and inefficiency which hamper the effectiveness of the regular army. Russia's leadership probably believe heavy casualties amongst PMCs will be better tolerated by Russian society compared to regular military losses.

Info-graphic

Tweeted by a UK pundit 4 Apr 23. Interesting way and good use of symbology to depict force development (am thinking Canadian and other defence policy reviews that are ongoing) for easy comprehension. How would the Canadian Armed Forces look in such a depiction?

Joint Force 2025

