



Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia Dispatches 19 May 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.

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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.

New: 24 May, Wednesday - RUSI An expert panel discussion on nuclear safety and security in Ukraine - Civilian Nuclear Infrastructure and the War in Ukraine. 14:30 - 15:30 (BST). Online. To register: <https://rusi.org/events/open-to-all/civilian-nuclear-infrastructure-and-war-ukraine>

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>

Postponed: 22 June - RUSI(NS) Distinguished Speaker Brigadier-General Masson, Commander 5th Canadian Division. **This event has been tentatively rescheduled for September. MTF.**

New: 26-27 June, Monday – Tuesday - RUSI Land Warfare Conference 2023, “Mobilising Today to Secure Tomorrow.” 09:00 - 17:00 BST. Church House, London | Online. To register: <https://rusi.org/events/martial-power-conferences/rusi-land-warfare-conference-2023>

Publications:

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

RUSI(NS) Paper "Chantier Davie Canada Inc – Post-2011 Activity – Construction, Conversion, Refit and Repair" by Captain Anthony Potts, 2 May 2023, https://rusi-ns.ca/chantier_davie/

RUSI(NS) Presentation "The Nova Scotia RCMP – Forward into 2023 and beyond" by ACmmr Dennis Daley, 1 May 2023, <https://rusi-ns.ca/nova-scotia-rcmp/>

RUSI(NS) Information Note "MV *Asterix* and HADR Missions", 26 April 2023
https://rusi-ns.ca/asterix_and_hadr_missions/

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

Canadian Marine Industries and Shipbuilding Association *On Watch*, 10 May 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*, April 2023

Military Institute of Windsor *Communiqué*, Volume XLI, Number 5, May 2023

Royal Alberta United Services Institute *Dispatches*, May 2023
<https://www.rausi.ca/component/acym/archive/197-rausi-dispatches-may-2023>

Royal Canadian Naval Association Admiral Hose Branch *Scuttlebutt*, May 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.

New: Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (Australia) *Defence Update*, Volume 18, Issue 5, 15 May 2023

New: Veterans Affairs Canada *Salute!* May 2023
<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-vac/news-media/salute/2023-05>

@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.

CDA Institute @CDAInstitute 16 May tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted:
Davies addresses pressing challenges surrounding procurement, highlighting the need for swift political decisions and a consolidated approach. It's time to break free from bureaucratic inertia and embrace a future of adaptable and secure national defense.



Veterans Affairs CA @Veterans ENG_CA 16 May tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted:
Today is #InternationalPeaceDay. ☮
Over the years, tens of thousands of @CanadianForces members have been deployed to take part in @UN @NATO and other multinational peace support operations. #CanadaRemembers those who have served and sacrificed.
<http://ow.ly/QIZB50Op4NN>



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

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300 troops being deployed to fight Alberta wildfires, more than \$2M paid out to evacuees

<https://www.cbc.ca/.../alberta-wildfire-evacuation-heat...>

"About 200 troops have been deployed by the Canadian Armed Forces to help fight wildfires burning across Alberta, and 100 more will be joining the battle to tame the flames over the weekend, the province's public safety minister said Thursday."

"Troops from 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and 1 Combat Engineer Regiment are setting up bases of operations in Grande Prairie County and Drayton Valley, the provincial government said Thursday."



Navy Combat-Support Ships in Action: The Sudan Evacuation Story

<https://gcaptain.com/navy-combat-support-ships-in-action.../>

Motor Vessel ASTERIX, converted from container ship to replenishment oiler (AOR) and leased to the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN), was in the region when non-combatant evacuation operations (NEO) were started by Canada and other countries. As an AOR, ASTERIX may not be as suited



to undertake NEO as the expeditionary mobile base and expeditionary fast transport noted in the article, and certainly not as well suited as any landing (a.k.a. amphibious) ship, but its conversion was done with humanitarian assistance/disaster relief missions in mind. It is a better vessel for NEO than the RCN frigate that was with it in the region and could have been so employed; see "MV Asterix and HADR Missions" (https://rusi-ns.ca/asterix_and_hadr_missions/). Ultimately, it appears from public reporting that ASTERIX was employed in its primary role of fuelling the RCN frigate and allied ships. AOR are important ships of a balanced, 'blue-water' navy. It's a big world out there. Canada should ensure the RCN always has three-four AOR.

Ireland likely to join NATO project to protect undersea cables

<https://www.irishtimes.com/.../ireland-likely-to-join.../>

"Ireland is a member of the NATO-led Partnership for Peace, which enables non-NATO members to co-operate with the alliance on specific projects. That membership, in place since 1999, is currently being renewed and a new NATO project called the Critical Undersea Infrastructure Cell is likely to be part of the discussions."

Is Canada participating in the NATO Critical Undersea Infrastructure Cell? Considering the importance of sea bottom/bed infrastructure (energy pipelines, communication cables) to Canada, we should. Undersea operations need to be a 'whole-of-government in collaboration with industry' undertaking.



New surveillance aircraft for Canadian special forces to start arriving later this year

<https://ottawacitizen.com/.../new-surveillance-aircraft...>

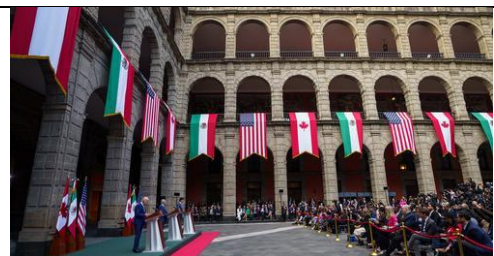
"The Beechcraft King Airplanes will be outfitted with sensors and equipment to intercept cellphone and other electronic transmissions."



Canada's Global Image: Half of Canadians believe nation's international reputation is on the decline

<https://angusreid.org/canada-nato-defence-spending.../>

"a new study from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds Canadians less enthusiastic about their perception of the country's international reputation than they have been in recent years. Half of Canadians (51%) say Canada has a good or very good reputation abroad, while one-quarter say it is poor or very poor (25%) and one-quarter (24%) say it is average. Notably, there has been a 33-point drop since 2018 in the proportion offering a positive view."



Military making progress but lacks ‘strategic’ misconduct reform plan: report

<https://globalnews.ca/.../canadian-forces-sexual.../>

"The Canadian Armed Forces is making progress as it implements recommendations aimed at combating sexual misconduct in the military, but lacks an “overall strategic plan” to change its culture, a new report says."

"Although Therrien concluded “a significant level of tangible activity” has been taken within the military on many of the 48 recommendations in Arbour’s final report over the past year, she said there needs to be an overarching plan to manage those changes in a way “that will bring fundamental reform in a timely manner.”"



Other Sources:

#Arctic

The Future of the High North

<https://www.act.nato.int/articles/future-high-north>

The Ukraine War and Arctic Collaboration: Final Remarks

<https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/ukraine-war-arctic-collaboration-final-remarks/>

#China

China Wields Sea Power with Navy Buildup

<https://www.newsweek.com/china-aircraft-carrier-navy-maritime-strategy-1797605>

“Joint Sword” Exercises Around Taiwan Suggest a Shift in PLA Operational Doctrine

<https://jamestown.org/program/joint-sword-exercises-around-taiwan-suggest-a-shift-in-pla-operational-doctrine/>

Report to Congress on Chinese Naval Modernization

<https://news.usni.org/2023/05/17/report-to-congress-on-chinese-naval-modernization-17>

#cyber operations #Russia

The Five Bears: Russia's Offensive Cyber Capabilities

<https://greynomics.com/the-five-bears-russias-offensive-cyber-capabilities/>

#Indo-Pacific

Sword out of Sheath?: Assessing the Strategic Implications of the PLA’s April Exercises Around Taiwan

<https://jamestown.org/program/sword-out-of-sheath-assessing-the-strategic-implications-of-the-plas-april-exercises-around-taiwan/>

China's Emerging Approach to Taiwan: Blockade and Disinformation

<https://jamestown.org/program/chinas-emerging-approach-to-taiwan-blockade-and-disinformation/>

Why are Chinese drones circling Taiwan?

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4888950>

#intelligence

From Newspapers to Wikis: The Ultimate Guide to Open Source Intelligence

<https://osintdaily.blogspot.com/2023/05/from-newspapers-to-wikis-ultimate-guide.html>

#NATO

NATO Details Defense Plans—And Reiterates Call for More Member Spending

<https://www.defenseone.com/policy/2023/05/nato-details-defense-plansand-reiterates-call-more-member-spending/386220/>

Note: NATO 2022 Strategic Concept <https://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/>

#naval warfare #NATO

Defending submarine cables in the Black Sea: A challenge for NATO and the region

<https://www.mei.edu/publications/defending-submarine-cables-black-sea-challenge-nato-and-region>

#reading

War Books: Science Fiction and Modern War

<https://mwi.usma.edu/war-books-science-fiction-and-modern-war/>

#Russia-Ukraine War

Naval Considerations in the Russo-Ukrainian War

<https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol75/iss4/4/>

#intelligence

Grain Trail: Tracking Russia's Ghost Ships with Satellite Imagery

<https://www.bellingcat.com/news/2023/05/11/grain-trail-tracking-russias-ghost-ships-with-satellite-imagery/>

How One Millennial Ukrainian Is Defeating Russians: Viral Videos, Collaboration, and Lots of Drones

<https://www.defenseone.com/threats/2023/05/how-one-millennial-ukrainian-defeating-russians-viral-videos-collaboration-and-lots-drones/386402/>

Answering The Call: Heavy Weaponry Supplied To Ukraine

<https://www.oryxspioenkop.com/2022/04/answering-call-heavy-weaponry-supplied.html>

The rise and fall of Z: What ever happened to Russia's war symbol?

https://www.euronews.com/2023/05/18/the-rise-and-fall-of-z-what-ever-happened-to-russias-talismanic-symbol?utm_term=Autofeed&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1684386386

#cyber ops

Ukraine War: Vast hacker 'militias' do little damage – but can rally mass support, says study

<https://breakingdefense.com/2023/05/ukraine-war-vast-hacker-militias-do-little-damage-but-can-rally-mass-support-says-study/>

Thoughts about victory

<https://threadreaderapp.com/thread/1659080754423386113.html>

#strategy #legal

Strategy and International Law

<https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2020/11/09/strategy-and-international-law>

#warfare

Reception, Staging, Onward Movement & Integration

<https://threadreaderapp.com/thread/1656800463461785601.html>

To this non-army co-editor of Dispatches, RSOI appears to be similar to Canadian reception, staging and onward movement (RSOM). RSOM/RSOI may seem to be something for army staff only, but non-army would be well advised to pay attention, particularly as they take on joint positions and operations.

In Defense of Bean Counting: Why Material Measures of National Power Matter

<https://mwi.usma.edu/in-defense-of-bean-counting-why-material-measures-of-national-power-matter/>

#wargaming

What is a Wargame?: A Case Study

<https://www.beyondsolitaire.net/blog/what-is-a-wargame-a-case-study>

Headquarters in Wargames <https://www.armchairdragoons.com/articles/columns/battle-lab-headquarters-in-wargames/>

The 40-60-80 Games

<http://www.dupuyinstitute.org/blog/2023/05/15/wargaming-101-the-40-60-80-games/>

Other:

Understanding Department of National Defence / Canadian Armed Forces (DND/CAF) Research and Capability Needs to Deter and Limit the Impacts of (Adversary) [Dis]information

https://www.cgai.ca/understanding_department_of_national_defence

This policy paper by Colonel (Ret'd) Brett Boudreau is an honest, if unsettling, look at the state of the DND/CAF ability to defend against misinformation and disinformation – a fundamental threat to

Canada and its national interests. In addition to examining the shortcomings, he identifies areas that need to be addressed through research and capability investment. This well researched paper is worth reading.

Military Strategy Magazine Volume 8 Issue 4

<https://www.militarystrategymagazine.com/>

contents:

A Strategist's Guide to Disruptive Innovation

A Quintessential Factor in Strategy Formulation: The Unequal Dialogue

Cold Wars, Grey Zones, and Strategic Competition: Applying Theories of War to Strategy in the 21st Century.

Securing Oman for Development: Sultan Qaboos Confronts his Enemies, 1970-1976

Will Artificial General Intelligence Change the Nature of War?

What Should a Strategist Know and Do, and Why

Security Affairs Committee Synopsis

O Canada

One of the biggest issues that Canada has is a lack of understanding of Canadian National interests. While one can Google or Bing this question of "what are Canada's national interests?", one cannot find at the top of the list an actual Canadian Government policy paper on this issue. There are many attempts by non-Government organizations such as the MacDonald Laurier Institute and others, the Government doesn't seem to understand the need for such a paper. Any policy or documentation on this issue has to be apolitical and noted and accepted by the Canadian public. One cannot develop a rational security policy as we are seeing now with the Chinese interference on our elections of 2019 and 2021 and the terrorizing of Canadians of Chinese descent by the Communist Chinese Party (CCP) or Canadians of Iranian descent for that matter. It also informs a common understanding of any foreign policy decisions. One can only despair at the "will-o-the wisp" actions currently unfolding as the current Government seeks to avoid the interference issue by "grandstanding" overseas. A foreign policy must reflect our interests which I hope is to stand with liberal democracies and to beggar authoritarian regimes whenever possible. It also therefore informs defence policy in a more realistic sense. One occasionally finds economic points more important on defence matters than actual defence matters. These are policies that need in fact must have all party support, these are not "nice to haves" they are essential today as they were prior to the Second World War. Mackenzie King had a much better grasp on world affairs than current Governments, but he had time to build, we do not. Canada's geographic security, our comfort blanket is gone; geopolitics and realpolitik are now what we must consider. It has to replace the "gong show" of the last few decades.

Speaking of the unspeakable, Terry Corcoran wrote an article in the Financial Post on 17 May 2023 at link: <https://ca.finance.yahoo.com/news/terence-corcoran-keep-politics-canada-100035357.html> suggesting that we separate politics and business in our relationship with China. One has to wonder about Mr Corcoran's ethical and moral compass as China continues to conduct genocidal acts against its minorities including concentration camps, forced marriages, executions, black jails, its assault on religion of all faiths, the assault on democracies and virtually all its neighbours. There are some areas where there can be some connection, but serious restrictions have to be made to prevent further Chinese attacks on Canada's economy, whether pork, beef, canola or lobsters. China is untrustworthy

and Canada is mired with business leaders who believe the cost to our ethics, morals and principles should be sacrificed for relations with China. The Canadian public is correct, and the business leadership is not in this case. China is a very special case and has to be dealt with, with skepticism at all times. There was also an article by Sylvain Charlebois called "Cold War hits Groceries." which apparently takes China's official figures at face value. China is not capable of feeding itself, droughts, floods (in different parts) have rendered agricultural areas unusable with remediation. Can will sell food even as its own people starve. The sooner Canada moves in concert with liberal democracies and against vile regimes as the CCP, the better. China is a hostile actor, in particular against Canada at present, we must understand they can never be trusted completely.

United States

The US continues on a strange self-destructive path caused by a lack of an agreement on the debt ceiling. A US default would be devastating around the world and hopefully the US leadership will find an answer soon before 1 June 2023.

The US will retire two aircraft carriers, the Nimitz and the Eisenhower will be retired in 2026 and 2027 respectively. The Gerald R. Ford class aircraft carriers John F. Kennedy and the new Enterprise are scheduled to replace them in the relatively near future. These two aircraft carriers will undergo deactivation along with the original nuclear aircraft carrier, the former USS Enterprise over the coming years.

The US is proposing a new design for Homeland Defence planning which will include Canada. The presentation by General Glen VanHerck is for a totally redesigned system of defence by 2035. It switches away from the current operations which include fighters, tankers, AWACs and the 47 station North Warning System. The modernization would include looking at autonomous platforms, airborne and seaborne unmanned platforms with domain awareness and "effectors" that provide a kinetic and non-kinetic response to threats. These unmanned systems can linger longer and cover wider areas than conventional means and may come in a variety of platforms which will also be accompanied by manned systems as well. Over the horizon radar will be a big part of any modernization effort capable of pass data in real time across an integrated air and missile defence system to neutralize threats. This would require a significant change to Canadian defence policy to allow for Canada to participate. The danger is if Canada doesn't do so, we will be negating our own sovereignty to the US. Loss of sovereignty is not something that Canadians want or desire. My thanks to a member of SAC who provided this information, and he will continue to watch this program as it unfolds.

Moldova

Why Moldova? Moldova is the canary in the European "coal mine." It has a large pro-Russian minority which apparently won an election in the Gagauzia region in local elections. Non-pro-Russian politicians didn't run at all and boycotted the election, so pro-Russian politicians mainly of the Shor Party, won every seat. Demonstrations against the national Government broke out almost immediately. Russia has conducted a virtually non-stop disinformation campaign aimed at destabilizing the current pro-Western Government of President Maia Sandu. How President Sandu's Government reacts and either succeeds or fails has import for all of Europe. The majority of citizens are pro-Western with about 30 % remaining pro-Russia. Demonstrations in the capital have occurred but were relatively small of around two to five thousand participants.

Ilen Shor is a convicted embezzler who stole the equivalent of 1 B USD from Moldovan banks. He fled to Israel to avoid imprisonment. He continues to direct actions against the Government. he was

sentenced to fifteen years in jail. He continues to support a pro-Russian line. He is apparently in league with certain Russian oligarchs and wishes to be one allegedly.

What is the European community and the current Government doing about this situation? The national government is strengthening the powers of the enforcement agencies of the Ministry of the Interior. The President accepted the new Prime Minister, the former Minister of the Interior, Dorin Recean to lead the Government against Russian destabilization efforts. Europe has supported Moldova with a civilian agency, to help advise Moldovan authorities on security issues. It has renewed the tariff regime to allow Moldovan goods to trade with Europe without tariffs. It is assisting Moldova with their application to join the EU and has greatly increased trade with the EU to nearly 60 % of exports with exports to Russia accounting for 26 %. Russia also imposed a penalty on Moldova, cutting their gas supply from 9 M m3 of gas to 5.7M m3 over the past winter thus further alienating many Moldovans. The EU stepped up and was able to replace Russian gas at a cheaper price. Romania is also helping the current Government which is using Romania's application as a guide for the future Moldovan application which should ease entry into the EU.

Russia still retains a 1500 man garrison in Transnistria along with a 6 k man militia. Russia has not made headway on removing the Transnistria issue after 30 years. Russia's actions and lack thereof have caused the Moldovan Government to resign from the Commonwealth of Independent States, made up of former Soviet states on 15 May 2023. It seems in the long run, so long as the West remains focused Russia will lose this battle as well. Moldova wants freedom and democracy not Russian authoritarianism.

Turkiye

The first election on 14 May 2023, has resulted in the requirement for a runoff election on 28 May 2023. The incumbent President Erdogan of the Justice and Development Party known better by its acronym AKP, received the nearly 50 % required for the win but fell short by half and percentage point at 49.5 %. His rival, Kilicdaroglu of the Republican Peoples' Party received 45 % and right wing extremist Party received 5% with others receiving less than 1% of the vote. The two main contenders will have a runoff. It will come down to which party can mobilize their supporters to vote. Either way, this election will have far reaching consequences in the future.

Turkiye's economy is in poor shape with inflation near an all time high, but despite Erdogan's mismanagement of the economy he still has appeal to a large percentage of the population. His vision has been adopted by many of his countrymen of a greater Turkish state. Whether this succeeds or not is another question.

Israel

Israel celebrated its 75th birthday on 14 May 2023. The event was overshadowed by political turbulence in Israel and ongoing conflict with Palestinians in Gaza. As of this note 33 Palestinians were killed in Gaza by Israeli airstrikes and an Israeli woman and a Palestinian worker were killed by rocket strikes from Gaza. The Palestinian was working in Israel. Many think Netanyahu's efforts against Gaza are related more to his attempts to position himself in a more favourable light and this may be the case especially if he is to avoid legal woes.

Iran

Iran executed a minimum of 582 prisoners for crimes against the state in 2022. Iran is on course for a much larger number this year. Despite this women are making a real effort to weaken the regime and a move toward removing headscarves continues despite actions by the authorities.

Belarus

The main story for Belarus is the apparent illness of the self-declared president of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, who departed Moscow quite suddenly after the 9 May Victory Parade. He did attend a similar event in Minsk but uncharacteristically he did not speak leaving the speech to the Minister of Defence instead. He was apparently hospitalized shortly after that event and was missing for a week from public life with little or no explanation. Even on Flag Day on Sunday, 14 May 2023 he left the event to his Prime Minister, Roman Golovchenko, something unheard of in Belarus. He has been seen since at the former air force headquarters, but he was seen wearing makeup in an attempt to show him as being healthier than he is. His meeting with security force chiefs was difficult for him as he was out of breath and his voice very weak. He also was wearing a bandage over his left hand; speculation was to cover up an IV site.

The opposition leader has called on all Belarus citizens to be prepared for anything, especially from Russia or pro-Russian forces within Belarus. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya remains outside the country because of threats to her life and family. Her husband is still in prison in Belarus. Is it possible that Lukashenko was poisoned in Russia or just bad food? Certainly, Putin would love to get a hold of fresh troops that are relatively well-trained just to the North of Kyiv for a potential attack. Is it time for the opposition to move as well?

Russia-Ukraine War

The war continues and the attrition on both sides is horrendous. Russian troops in particular the Wagner group continue to push ahead in Bakhmut despite heavy losses to Ukrainian defenders, but they have succeeded in pushing well into the last sector held by Ukraine. Ukraine has conducted limited counterattacks within the city, but the real counterattacks are occurring on both the North and South flanks around Bakhmut. Ukrainian forces have taken more than 20 km² in the last four days, eliminating months of gains on the flanks by Russian forces. These efforts have slowed down as Russia pours more troops into the area of the flanks to stop the Ukrainian advances, but it has not stopped the advance. One can't help but wonder if Ukrainians are "sucking in" Russian forces into a pocket which they may close eliminating Russia's most effective troops. Time will tell.

In the meantime, Ukraine has showered rear logistics and transportation hubs with the new "Storm Shadow" missiles to great effect. They used a similar approach prior to last summer's offensive knocking out command and control and the ability of Russia to resupply their Army. Ukraine is also buoyed by the effect of efficient modern Western air defence systems which mitigate against Russian air force assets at the front. The storm shadow and other loner range missile systems now put Russian frontline aviation assets in peril even at bases within Russia and Crimea proper, loss of major air bases would likely spell the end of the Russian invasion.

Russia did seem to have some success with its latest missile and drone attacks on Kyiv. Although Kyiv has stated that all Russian objects were shot down, it became clear that debris from the targets caused collateral damage on the ground. Russia has claimed it destroyed a patriot battery, it was very clear that they didn't as a battery consists of eight launchers plus command and control vehicles and ancillary vehicles for repair and supply of new weapons. Apparently one part of a Patriot system was damaged but not destroyed, but nothing is confirmed one way or another.

Russia and Ukraine have both agreed to meet with an African peace delegation with representatives from six countries including South Africa and Senegal. South Africa has been tainted by suggestions that it supplied ammunition and weapons to Russia and secondly because their Army Chief of Staff visited Moscow in the past week. Still, this is a first with African nations willing to facilitate peace talks in a European conflict. Let us hope for their success. A Chinese peace envoy is also doing the rounds allegedly for peace negotiations. China is ill-suited to such a role because of its ongoing relationship with Russia as well as its own tactics against neighbours and its actions against its own citizens.

Ukraine's offensive has not started and according to the Ukrainian President, it may be delayed to ensure readiness of Ukraine's forces.

China

Xi does not have a successor. Mao also adopted the same approach as selection of a successor would give rise to a second hub of influence surrounding the new "crown prince" thus potentially overshadowing the "core leader." Xi was brought up in this tradition and because of the nature of his family would be fully versed in the reasoning behind this approach. There can be no pre-determined successor. Mao constantly looked at potential successors, some were tried but Mao usually sidelined them or got rid of them as required. It was only on his deathbed that he finally relented and named a successor. It appears that Xi is of the same mindset. He takes the approach called dynamic adjustments, meaning many will be chosen but only one will succeed but they will not know this until the actual succession starts. Many will be tried, but with Xi's overwhelming ego, one can expect he will adopt the other aspect of Mao's thoughts on succession and that is only passing the mantle on his death bed.

China's economy continues to be confusing mainly because the regime of the CCP requires the provincial and autonomous regional leadership to essentially 'lie' and submit 'positive' reports on their success in achieving party assigned tasks in order to maintain their jobs and positions. Negative outcomes on tasks also usually means very negative action on the individual responsible. This means most if not all financial figures are false or nearly so whether talking population figures, business success, and provincial budgets/revenues. One point is clear...the success of the Chinese economy is not actually achieved except by expenditures on infrastructure that is not needed. Spending money they don't have and do not have the revenue to pay back on infrastructure without an actual real need. Healthy revenue is caused by consumer spending, private investment and production of material that has an actual customer willing to pay. Unfortunately, the CCP forced provincial administrations to create useless infrastructure rather than the healthy type of investment. Much of this is caused by the CCP's own stupidity in reducing the ability of the private sector to create jobs and to increase their investments by over regulation in favour of moribund state owned enterprises.

The incompetence of the CCP is an impediment to Chinese prosperity and governance. It is the single biggest drain on Chinese success.



RUSSIA'S CLAIM:

On May 11, 2023, the Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry claimed that the U.S. Patriot air defence system is unable to intercept the Russian hypersonic Kinzhal (a.k.a. KILLJOY) missile.

BASED ON CANADIAN FORCES INTELLIGENCE COMMAND ANALYSIS:

- On May 16, a Patriot battery in Kyiv defended against a Russian missile barrage that included Kinzhal missiles.
- Ukrainian authorities have also released photos of debris from an earlier Kinzhal missile attack that a Ukrainian Patriot battery intercepted on May 3.
- Russia appears to have repeatedly and specifically targeted Patriot sites in Ukraine over the past two weeks, likely because of the system's combat effectiveness.



INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- On the night of 08-09 May 2023, the Russian Navy's Black Sea Fleet vessels launched eight SS-N-30a SAGARIS land attack cruise missiles (LACMs) against Ukraine. This was only the second use of Russian Navy LACMs reported since 09 March 2023.
- Up to March 2023, the Russian Navy frequently launched SAGARIS. Russia likely temporarily suspended using these weapons because it wanted to rebuild its reserve stocks. In the short-term, Russia likely sees LACM as a key capability to strike deep into Ukraine to disrupt anticipated Ukrainian counter-offensives.
- However, more strategically, Russia also sees conventional SAGARIS and other LACMs as having an important role in any hypothetical conflict with NATO. How to use these scarce and expensive weapons is one of the numerous dilemmas Russian commanders face because the war in Ukraine has gone on much longer than they originally planned for.

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- Over the last four days, elements of Russia's 72nd Separate Motor Rifle Brigade (72 SMRB) likely withdrew in bad order from their positions on the southern flank of the Bakhmut operation. Ukrainian forces regained at least a kilometre of territory.
- The area has some tactical significance because it was a Russian bridgehead on the western side of the Donets-Donbas Canal, which marks the front line through parts of the sector.
- 72 SMRB is an element of Russia's 3rd Army Corps, a formation created in Autumn 2022 and dogged with allegations of poor morale and limited combat effectiveness. Its deployment to such a demanding and operationally important sector highlights Russia's severe shortage of credible combat units.

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- On paper, the Russian Combined Grouping of Forces (CGF) in Ukraine is similarly organised to the invasion force of 446 days ago. It still likely consists of over 200,000 personnel organised into around 70 combat regiments and brigades divided into five Groups of Forces. It still struggles with limited freedom to conduct air operations.
- However, in February 2022 it consisted of professional soldiers; was largely equipped with reasonably modern vehicles; and had been regularly exercised, aspiring to complex, joint operations. Now the force is mostly poorly trained mobilised reservists and increasingly reliant on antiquated equipment, with many of its units severely under-strength. It routinely only conducts very simple, infantry-based operations.
- Critically, it is unlikely that CGF has been able to generate a large, capable, mobile reserve to respond to emerging operational challenges. It is unlikely to be an organisation which will effectively cohere large-scale military effect along the 1,200 km front line under stress.

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- On 03 May 2023, several uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs) struck Russia's Seshcha Airbase, 150 km north of the Ukrainian border. One An-124 heavy transport aircraft of Russia's Military Transport Aviation (VTA) was likely damaged.
- Seshcha is a hub for the VTA in western Russia and has played a major role in enabling Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Russia also uses the site to launch Iranian-produced one-way-attack UAVs towards Kyiv.
- The VTA is a well-resourced element of the Russian Air Force, essential for transport across the vast country. Russian leaders will be concerned that Russia's air defences continue to be compromised, holding at risk key strategic assets such as VTA bases.

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- Wagner Group forces continue to make gradual progress in clearing Ukrainian positions in the town centre of the contested Donetsk Oblast town of Bakhmut. However, over the last four days, Ukrainian forces have made tactical progress stabilising the flanks of Bakhmut to their advantage.
- As well as progress to the south of town, Ukrainian assaults have forced back the Russian frontline to the north-west of the town. This has likely enabled Ukrainian forces to re-establish more secure use of the key 0506 supply road.
- Ukraine is holding Russia's western advances along the line of Donets-Donbas Canal, turning the waterway into an obstacle as part of a deep defensive zone around the town of Chasiv Yar.

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- Over the last week, the air battle over the Russia-Ukraine border has intensified. On 13 May 2023 alone, four Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS) aircraft (two advanced combat jets and two helicopters) crashed, apparently shot down over Russia's Bryansk region.
- On 03 May 2023, Ukraine achieved the first ever shoot-down of a KILLJOY air-launched ballistic missile. Subsequently, Russia has prioritised attempting to neutralise Ukraine's improved air defence capabilities, but in the process has likely lost several more KILLJOY.
- The increased air threat over Russia's border region will be of exceptional concern for the VKS because it uses the area to launch air power in support of the war. The apparent vulnerability of KILLJOY is likely a surprise and an embarrassment for Russia: Russian President Vladimir Putin has touted the system as undefeatable.

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- The Russian state is likely effectively banning senior officials from resigning from their jobs while the 'Special Military Operation' continues. The measures likely extend to at least regional leaders, security officials and members of the powerful Presidential Administration.
- In private, many officials are likely highly sceptical about the war, as well as often experiencing work stress within the dysfunctional wartime apparatus. The ban is likely enforced with strong hints that resignees will face trumped up criminal charges.
- As well as being concerned about capability gaps resignees would leave, the authorities are likely also attempting to prevent any impression of defeatism, and to bolster a sense of collective responsibility for the war.

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- On 18 May 2023, a train derailed near Simferopol, blocking the only rail line into the port of Sevastopol, the base of Russia's Black Sea Fleet (BSF). The railway authorities said it was a result of "interference by outsiders."
- Russia will move to repair the line quickly, but the incident will disrupt deliveries of supplies and potentially also weaponry, such as Kalibr cruise missiles, to the BSF.
- Any sabotage in this sensitive area will further increase the Kremlin's concerns about its ability to protect other key infrastructure in Crimea. The peninsula retains a vital psychological and logistical role in enabling Russia's war in Ukraine.