



## Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia Dispatches 18 August 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](mailto: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).

### **Dispatches 1 September 2023**

A volunteer is need to edit the 1 Sep edition of *Dispatches* in the absence of the current (temporary anyways) editor the week prior. If you can help, please email [RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com](mailto:RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com).

#### **Events:**

**5 September**, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation "Ender's Legacy: Digital Wargames in Professional Military Education." 5-7 pm ADT. Online. For more info and to register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/enders-legacy-digital-wargames-in-professional-military-education-tickets-632470725967>.

**amended: 20 September**, Wednesday - RUSI(NS) Distinguished Speaker BGen Masson, Comd 5 Cdn Div, presenting "Our troops are ready." 1300-1500. Royal Artillery Park Officers' Mess.

**20 September**, Wednesday - 2023 U.S. Naval Institute presentation "Competition or Confrontation? The Urgent Realities for the U.S. Navy When Facing China's PLAN." 2 pm EDT. Live stream on US Naval Institute YouTube.Channel. More info and to register: <https://www.usni.org/events/competition-or-confrontation>.

**3 October**, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation "Cardboard Meets Bits, Designing a WWII Tactical Leadership RPG." 7-9 pm ADT. Online. "The game strives to give players a tactically credible, emotionally authentic, and historically respectful experience of leading a US infantry company." For more info and to register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cardboard-meets-bits-designing-a-wwii-tactical-leadership-crpg-tickets-631859688337>.

**17 October**, Tuesday - "Re-Fighting History The War in the East, Boardgames, and Histories of WWII." 7-9 pm ADT. Online. For more info and to register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/re-fighting-history-the-war-in-the-east-boardgames-and-histories-of-wwii-tickets-684218986407>.

**18 October**, Wednesday - RUSI(NS) Distinguished Speaker from the RCN, speaking about the Navy, particularly submarines. 1400-1600. Royal Artillery Park Officers' Mess. MTF.

Recommended reading:

Canada's Future Submarine Capability

<https://cdainstitute.ca/canadas-future-submarine-capability/>

**12 December**, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation "The Tyranny of Binaries: how wargame rules build narratives." 7-9 pm AST. Online. For more info and to register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-tyranny-of-binaries-how-wargame-rules-build-narratives-tickets-633057882167>.

### **Publications:**

Publications without links are available on request to [RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com](mailto:RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com).

RUSI(NS) Paper "Kingston-class Ships – Less than meets the eye" by SWD Swan, 1 August 2023, <https://rusi-ns.ca/kingston-class/>

RUSI(NS) Comments "Naval Doctrine and Strategy," 25 July 2023, [https://rusi-ns.ca/naval\\_doctrine\\_strategy/](https://rusi-ns.ca/naval_doctrine_strategy/)

RUSI(NS) Information Note "Brigade and Brigade Group," 15 July 2023, [https://rusi-ns.ca/brigade\\_brigade\\_group/](https://rusi-ns.ca/brigade_brigade_group/)

RUSI(NS) Comments "Canada's Special Forces #Helicopters are Obsolete for the Role They are Tasked to Carry Out" by RUSI(NS) SAC, 10 Jul 23, [https://rusi-ns.ca/sof\\_griffon/](https://rusi-ns.ca/sof_griffon/)

RUSI(NS) Information Note "Armoured Fighting Vehicles," 2 July 2023, <https://rusi-ns.ca/armoured-fighting-vehicles/>

RUSI(NS) History & Heritage Paper "Canadian Corvettes in the Second World War – A General History" by Dr Richard Gimblett, 24 June 2023, <https://rusi-ns.ca/canadian-corvettes-in-the-second-world-war/>

**New:** Canadian Marine Industries and Shipbuilding Association *On Watch*, 16 August 2023  
<https://www.cmisa.ca/cpages/on-watch-current>

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

Military Institute of Windsor *Communiqué*, Volume XLI, Number 7, July-August 2023

Nautical Professional Education Society of Canada *Seatimes*, August 2023.

Royal Alberta United Services Institute *Dispatches*, August 2023  
<https://rausi.ca/component/acym/archive/208-rausi-dispatches-august-2023>

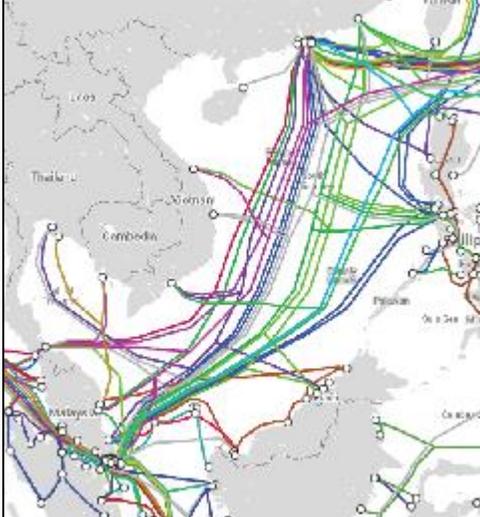
Royal Canadian Naval Association Admiral Hose Branch *Scuttlebutt*, August 2023

**New:** Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (Australia) *Defence Update*, Volume 20, Issue 2, 14 August 2023

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

**@RUSI\_NS on X:**

@RUSI\_NS posts may also be viewed by clicking on the icon at <https://RUSI-NS.ca>. To have something posted or reposted, email RUSI(NS).

<p>Skies Magazine @SkiesMag 10 Aug tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: Does @Boeing have an edge with the P-8A #Poseidon as a solution for the CMMA project? We check in with Boeing and its Canadian “Team Poseidon” partners to analyze the P-8A offering for the Canadian Multi-Mission #Aircraft project. <a href="https://skiesmag.com/features/boeing-edge-p-8a-poseidon-aircraft-solution-cmma-project/">https://skiesmag.com/features/boeing-edge-p-8a-poseidon-aircraft-solution-cmma-project/</a></p>	
<p>David Pugliese @davidpugliese 12 Aug tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: Why doesn't Canada have a national wildfire-fighting force? Ottawa has no plans for a national wildfire-fighting force, even as experts warn it's badly needed (<a href="https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/national-wildfire-fighting-force-canada-1.6925785">https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/national-wildfire-fighting-force-canada-1.6925785</a>)</p>	
<p>Jamestown Foundation @JamestownTweets 5 Aug tweeted: "The domestic regulations within the #US and #China are particularly significant given the importance of both countries to the international submarine cable market" @williamyuenyee for @ChinaBriefJT RUSI(NS) retweeted: "99 - % of intercontinental data tfc, SWIFT financial messaging network, diplomatic cables &amp; military orders that are passed thru submarine cables, as opposed to other means" Security of CAN🇨🇦 critical sea bottom infrastructure needs to be resourced, effort by multiple fed depts</p>	

Bill Blair @BillBlair 12 Aug tweeted: Northwest Territories: We stand with the people of the Northwest Territories as they deal with serious wildfires. In response to a request for assistance, the @CanadianForces will help with firefighting efforts, air transportation, and planning, coordination and logistics.  
RUSI(NS) retweeted: Supporting Canadians in crises, what our military does so well. #OpLENTUS = @CanadianForces assistance to province(s) in response to natural disaster(s) <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/operation-lentus.html> But we should be more prepared, not calling on them so often for non-conflict situations



NATO ACT @NATO\_ACT 14 Aug tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: #NATO relies on the #Space domain for communication, navigation & more. As space activities merge with security concerns, @NATO\_ACT enhances awareness & interoperability of NATO & Allied space capabilities through multiple crosscutting efforts: <https://act.nato.int/article/acts-2023-space-activities-recap/> #WeAreNATO  
(Allied Command Transformation's 2023 Space Activities: A Recap)



CDA Institute @CDAInstitute 14 Aug tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: From CDA Institute honorary member, @PeterMacKay: "If Ottawa wants to get the critically important future of our CAF right and make the correct decisions, gov must start by addressing the strategic atrophy that has been allowed to fester around defence."  
(Peter MacKay: The urgent need to fix Canada's military — and how to do it <https://www.coldlakesun.com/opinion/the-urgent-need-to-fix-canadas-military-and-how-to-do-it>)



David Pugliese @davidpugliese 16 Aug tweeted: Germany walks back plan to meet NATO spending target on annual basis (<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/germany-walks-back-plan-meet-nato-spending-target-annual-basis-2023-08-16/>)  
RUSI(NS) retweeted: GER not attempting to meet #NATO target of 2% GDP sets unfortunate precedent for other states (CAN🇨🇦!). Will be interesting to see what upcoming Defence Policy Update commits to or not



Ottawa Citizen @OttawaCitizen 15 Aug tweeted: Analysis: Irving gets \$463 million more from taxpayers for troubled warship program  
RUSI(NS) retweeted: It is time to review the 🇨🇦 National Shipbuilding Strategy (<https://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/amd-dp/mer-sea/sncn-nss/index-eng.html>), its objectives, restraints, constraints & measures of effectiveness/success. Maybe publish as single document. Review should be directed by upcoming Defence Policy Update.



CDA Institute @CDAInstitute 14 Aug tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: "Increasingly, at the national level, what we're witnessing is drift—a lack of real leadership, a lack of real vision, a lack of urgency, a lack of energy. And what we need to do is have a series of clear goals that are to be achieved." (Dr. James Boutilier on Indo-Pacific Security <https://cdainstitute.ca/dr-james-boutilier-on-indo-pacific-security/>)



Skies Magazine @SkiesMag 17 Aug tweeted and RUSI(NS) retweeted: RCAF aircraft, CAF personnel respond to wildfires in NWT as state of emergency declared. More details: <https://skiesmag.com/news/rcaf-aircraft-caf-personnel-respond-wildfires-nwt-state-emergency-declared/> #aviation #aircraft #airplane #NWT #canadianwildfires #RCAF #CAF (RCAF aircraft, CAF personnel respond to wildfires in NWT as state of emergency declared)



"Arms advances" <https://legionmagazine.com/en/arms-advances/> "The very first responsibility of a government is to guard the sovereignty of the nation." Let's measure their success in that when we vote 🇨🇦, not when we're facing adversaries on own doorsteps



Canadian Army @CanadianArmy 11 Aug tweeted: Today, His Majesty King Charles III, King of Canada, has graciously announced that he will adopt the Royal Appointment of **Captain General of The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery**. Ubique!



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

RUSI(NS) posts may also be viewed by clicking on the icon at <https://RUSI-NS.ca>. To have something posted or commented, email RUSI(NS).

### **His Majesty’s Canadian Ship Harry DeWolf Deploys on Operation Nanook 2023**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2023/08/his-majestys-canadian-ship-harry-dewolf-deploys-on-operation-nanook-2023.html>

"...HMCS HARRY DEWOLF will engage Northern communities through activities in regional hamlets, towns, and shipboard visits, and will provide armed presence patrols along the Northwest Passage."



Interesting to see the words "armed presence patrols." Don't often see 'armed' used in this way, especially for Canadian activities. There is implicit that presence patrols have some force to back them up (to make a statement, often that of deterrence), and being a warship (the Arctic and Offshore Patrol Vessels meet the legal definition of warship), one can expect some form for armament, even if as in their case it is light. Was the choice of wording deliberate, to send some sort of message, or might it be news release wording the significance of which was not appreciated?

### **The Case For Ukraine Acquiring MQ-9 Reapers**

<https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/the-case-for-ukraine-acquiring-mq-9-reapers>

Interesting (detailed) read. This is the aircraft being acquired by the Royal Canadian Air Force Remotely Piloted Aircraft System project.



See: "Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles – Canadian and US Programs" (<https://rusi-ns.ca/rpas/>).

### It's a mistake to think Canadians don't care about national security

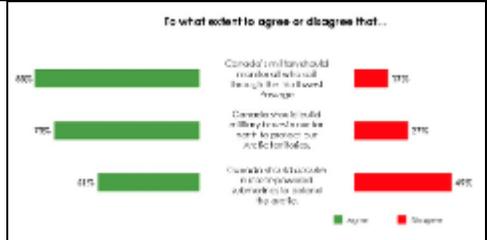
<https://thehub.ca/2023-08-11/richard-shimooka-its-a-mistake-to-think-canadians-dont-care-about-national-security/>



### More Than Half (56%) of Canadians Consider Canada's Armed Forces to be Old and Antiquated

<https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/half-of-canadians-consider-armed-forces-antiquated>

Interesting numbers. Now, what to do about them?



### How Can NATO Overcome Russia's Black Sea Blockade?

<https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/how-can-nato-overcome-russias-black-sea-blockade>



*From a Master Mariner colleague:* Interesting article and quite broad in its approach to suggest solutions. I believe the absolute and physical blockade of Russia's Baltic and Pacific ports is essential to enforce the commercial sanctions and at the same time obstruct India and China's access to Russian energy. That would mean that Russia would need access to its own Black Sea ports which Ukraine has successfully put at risk with its sea drones. Arctic Sea blockades would be more difficult, but less attractive to commercial goods and containers. Leave it to the strategists to have the daring to make it happen.

*Also note:* Ukraine Opens Temporary Shipping Channels in Black Sea

<https://news.usni.org/2023/08/10/ukraine-opens-temporary-shipping-channels-in-black-sea>

Economic and legal warfare!

### Russian warship fires warning shots at cargo ship in Black Sea

<https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/world/russian-warship-fires-warning-shots-at-cargo-ship-in-black-sea/ar-AA1fe5Ts>



"A Russian warship on Sunday fired warning shots at a cargo ship in the southwestern Black Sea as it made its way northwards..."

The Black Sea is becoming more a trade-contested area. Classic naval escalation.

## Royal Canadian Navy ships deploy to Indo-Pacific Region

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2023/08/royal-canadian-navy-ships-deploy-to-indo-pacific-region.html>

His Majesty's Canadian Ships OTTAWA and VANCOUVER, in company with Motor Vessel ASTERIX, leased to the Royal Canadian Navy as a replenishment oiler (supply and services ship), departed from Esquimalt BC on 14 August 2023 for the Indo-Pacific region. The deployment seems to be a mix of Operations HORIZON, which is replacing PROJECTION "Canada's ongoing naval forward presence mission to promote peace and stability in support of the rules-based international order" (<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/operation-projection.html>) and NEON, "Canada's contribution to a coordinated multinational effort to support the implementation of United Nations Security Council sanctions imposed against North Korea" (<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/operation-neon.html>). Such a mix of operations is not abnormal for naval deployments. Interestingly though, as it has not been routine in recent years, is to see a naval task group (TG) of two frigates and a support ship sail. Often in the past deployment have been single ship or groups of smaller Kingston-class regional patrol vessels. The movements of naval and other military forces always have to be considered for what is being signalled internationally. By sailing a TG, is Canada making a statement, deliberately or otherwise?



Task Force - 1. A temporary grouping of units, under one commander, formed for the purpose of carrying out a specific operation or mission.

2. Semi-permanent organization of units, under one commander, formed for the purpose of carrying out a continuing specific task.

Task Group - A component of a naval task force organized by the commander of a task force or higher authority.

Task Unit - A component of a naval task group organized by the commander of a task group or higher authority.

## Peter MacKay: The urgent need to fix Canada's military — and how to do it

<https://www.coldlakesun.com/opinion/the-urgent-need-to-fix-canadas-military-and-how-to-do-it>

"Therefore, if Ottawa wants to get the critically important future of our Canadian Armed Forces right and make the correct decisions, the government must start by addressing the strategic atrophy that has been allowed to fester around defence."



### **Build it and they will land**

<https://www.defence.gov.au/news-events/news/2023-08-02/build-it-and-they-will-land>

Looking forward to stories about employment in exercises and operations of the powered barges that have been delivered to the Royal Canadian Navy by the Ship-to-Shore Connector project as part of the Joint Support Ship project, itself to deliver two Protecteur-class replenishment oilers which will carry the barges. See: "Ship-to-Shore Connector Barges" <https://rusi-ns.ca/ship-to-shore-connector/>.



### **New Drone Boat Named Sea Baby Used In Kerch Bridge Attack**

<https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/new-drone-boat-named-sea-baby-used-in-kerch-bridge-attack>

Canada needs to be able to build uncrewed surface vehicles (drones). The Canadian Armed Forces and particularly the Royal Canadian Navy needs to be able to operate and to counter such craft. Is this a distinct form of warfare for which there should be people assigned, equipment procured and doctrine developed?

- - -

*Comment:* Regrettable the USV and other drones are called 'kamikaze'. It's a disrespect to those who fought the real kamikazes (and, depending on one's perspective, to those who drove them). Better a term, such as being used by UK intelligence reporting, as 'one way attack uncrewed surface vehicles' (OWA-USV).

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*Video also available at:* Navy Lookout @NavyLookout 16 Aug tweeted

<https://twitter.com/NavyLookout/status/1691796790209556936>: Official Ukrainian sources have released a video of their domestically-developed "sea baby" kamikaze USV used in the attack on the Kerch bridge. Carries 860Kg explosive. #ukrainewar



### **U.S.-Philippine Coast Guard Patrols: Time To Provoke The Provocateur**

<https://www.19fortyfive.com/2023/08/u-s-philippine-coast-guard-patrols-time-to-provoke-the-provocateur/>

This article is not just about a maritime strategy for the Philippines-China region. The points made in the article, the strategy, can be applicable anywhere, especially for 'gray zone' confrontation situations. Canada should take note and be prepared to respond to such provocation as the Chinese practice.



### **Other Sources:**

#### **#artificial intelligence**

War is messy. AI can't handle it.

<https://thebulletin.org/2023/08/war-is-messy-ai-cant-handle-it/>

## **#defence policy #NATO**

Canada's free riding on NATO: America needs to pick a lane

<https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/canadas-free-riding-on-nato-america-needs-to-pick-a-lane-brian-lee-crowley-in-the-washington-times/>

## **#drones**

The Psychology of Killing with Drones: Reviewing On Killing Remotely

<https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2023/8/16/reviewing-on-killing-remotely>

## **#economic warfare**

Exploring the Impact of Underwater Acoustic Modems on Global Strategic Business Operations

<https://fagenwasanni.com/news/the-impact-of-underwater-acoustic-modems-on-global-strategic-business-operations/51134/>

*Could increased control of underwater acoustic modems by the West be another way of restraining Chinese aggression?*

## **#logistics**

The Impact of Supply Chain Issues on Military Training and Readiness

<https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/July-August-2023/Supply-Chain-Issues/>

Not All Heroes Wear Capes: The Unwritten Rules of Army Logistics

<https://news.clearancejobs.com/2023/08/15/not-all-heroes-wear-capes-the-unwritten-rules-of-army-logistics/>

## **#NATO**

Countering hybrid threats

[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_156338.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_156338.htm)

## **#naval warfare #drones**

New Report Calls for Rethinking Undersea Warfare with Emphasis on Uncrewed Systems

<https://news.usni.org/2023/08/04/new-report-calls-for-rethinking-undersea-warfare-with-emphasis-on-uncrewed-systems>

## **#reading**

War Books: A Major War Fiction Reading List

<https://mwi.westpoint.edu/war-books-preparing-great-power-competition-fiction-reading-list/>

## **#Russia**

Russian Arms Production Q2 2023

<https://jamestown.org/program/russian-arms-production-q2-2023/>

## 'Cope Cages' Go Mainstream At Russia's Arms Bazaar

<https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/cope-cages-go-mainstream-at-russias-arms-bazaar>

*And tinfoil hats for the crew...*



## #Russia-Ukraine War

Ukraine's Slow-Moving Counteroffensive: Problems and Solutions (Part One)

<https://jamestown.org/program/ukraines-slow-moving-counteroffensive-problems-and-solutions-part-one/>

Why new tech hasn't revolutionized warfare in Ukraine

<https://www.militarytimes.com/opinion/2023/08/17/why-new-tech-hasnt-revolutionized-warfare-in-ukraine/>

## #space

Irregular warfare in space is an ongoing threat – and the US must adapt.

<https://breakingdefense.com/2023/08/irregular-warfare-in-space-is-an-ongoing-threat-and-the-us-must-adapt/>

## #strategy

Strategy Is For The Bad Guys: Why Modern Pop Culture Struggles to Understand Ends and Means

<https://www.militarystrategymagazine.com/article/strategy-is-for-the-bad-guys-why-modern-pop-culture-struggles-to-understand-ends-and-means/>

## #war

Definitions of war and conflict typologies

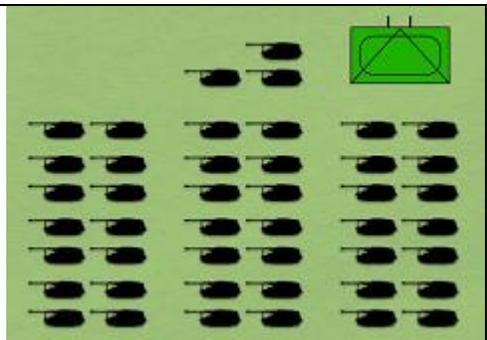
<https://warpp.info/en/m1/articles/definitions-of-war-and-conflict-typologies>

## Other:

### Rules for Military Writing

<https://tacticalnotebook.substack.com/p/rules-for-military-writing>

*So salient!*



## **Security Affairs Committee Synopsis**

### **O Canada**

A warm welcome to the new Minister of Defence, Bill Blair of Toronto. A former Chief of Police for Toronto and a former Minister of Public Safety. His work will be difficult as defence is not a high priority for this government. It is expected that he will be mainly a caretaker but one still has some hope that one will be surprised. The Canadian Armed Forces are probably in the worst shape since the Second World War with most equipment far out of date and recruiting crippled by a poor system long pointed out by many for decades. Worse yet, the Defence Policy Update has been long delayed but sorely needed as the world situation continues to deteriorate. The defence policy is actually more a laundry list rather than sound policy. It is also not supported by sound security and foreign policy which would give the necessary information to make informed decisions. While this is not a "vote getter" it does impact how the country is perceived by the international community. Our promise to back the UN has fallen well below expectations as has our commitment to NATO and NORAD. It effects how our partners conduct relations with us including trade and policy initiatives on many issues. It has even caused countries to question why Canada is a G7 country. There are penalties for making pronouncements without backing them up with real resources, such as promising to build to a brigade for Latvia.

The CAF continues to be the "go to" folks for forest fires, noting this week's requests from the North-West Territories and others. While commendable and good for publicity the CAF's response takes away from the very real need to train and prepare for actual military operations. The armed forces of any country exist for deterrence and lethality, in our case with allies. Forest fires and other natural disasters are a provincial responsibility, not federal. Federal resources should be a last resort when nothing else is available and not a catch up for provinces failing to provide sufficient resources to meet requirements.

There have been several articles recently including one by Lloyd Axworthy about Canada's North and the need to provide for increased defence assets as well as other initiatives to protect our sovereignty. The article also suggests that the Northern countries come together to create a NATO of the North. Even the US has limited capacity there. Canada has been offered assistance by the Royal Navy, who have suggested that UK submarines could be used for our protection by patrolling in our North. Russia has continued to reinforce its northern defences by reopening bases and allocating increased resources to that area as they view it as vital to their ongoing prosperity and in fact survival. An interesting ideal given Canada's lack of capacity as part of an overall NATO commitment. Many Canadians are unaware that Northern Canada is closer to Moscow than Ottawa and that both Russia and Denmark have made claims to areas of Canada's Northern Economic Exclusion Zone (EEZ). Canada is in danger of losing actual areas because the country has not taken the issues seriously as have others.

Canada needs to take a very hard look at its security, foreign and defence policies in a non-partisan way. It needs a collective understanding of the very real issues about to disturb our navel gazing. Australia and New Zealand provide examples for us. We should take a look.

### **Australia and New Zealand**

Australia and New Zealand live in a difficult part of the world facing an imperialistic China which appears to have an overwhelming edge in the region. Both countries are examining their relationships within the area. Both countries realize that China has interfered with their political system and harassed their citizens as well as affected legitimate conversations at schools and universities. China

also threatened citizens of Chinese ethnicity supposedly by threatening family still in China. Australia and New Zealand have recognized the very real threat China imposes and therefore are now taking action...unlike another country which seems to think there is no urgency to this issue. Some countries have a realistic approach and some countries do not. Chinese interference is real and ongoing in countries around the world. A more robust response is required. My thanks to our correspondent down under for the provision of appropriate articles. The links below are part of that group of articles. The comments are his unless otherwise noted.

“Indian navy ships dock in Papua New Guinea as interest in Pacific sharpens”

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/495056/indian-navy-ships-dock-in-papua-new-guinea-as-interest-in-pacific-sharpens>

The near north (India) is moving south in its spread of influence and search for economic and political opportunities.

“A guide to Perth, Western Australia's revitalised coastal capital”

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/perth-guide-western-australia>

This is an infomercial from the National Geographic gang on the virtues of Perth. There is more fact than fiction in it. Nice city it is, but it is not inexpensive due to its isolation. Future foreign submariners may need a pay raise to fully enjoy it!

“Sleepy air base awakens”

<https://www.defence.gov.au/news-events/news/2023-08-02/sleepy-air-base-awakens>

This article provides some info about the challenge of maintaining and operating minimally maintained and staffed airbases in northern Australia.

“Build it and they will land”

<https://www.defence.gov.au/news-events/news/2023-08-02/build-it-and-they-will-land>

As we know, it is all about logistics! The Americans and Aussies have practiced it.

“Planning defence projects for a new submarine era”

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/planning-defence-projects-for-a-new-submarine-era/>

This article starts to reveal some of the challenges facing the Australian Defence Forces and government with respect to the nuclear submarine initiative. The biggest challenge is people resources. One has to add "facilities" to the list. These challenges can be met given adequate resources drawn from national and international sources; however, the leadership must come from within the country and competent Australian leaders must be involved at all levels and times.

“Defence Strategic Review”

<https://online.flippingbook.com/view/909943058/ii/>

This is a copy of the Australian Strategic Defence Review.

USS *North Carolina*, SSN-777, arrived at Fleet Base West, Fremantle (Rockingham) on 5 August 2023. It is the first boat in a series that will build up to five subs by 2027.

“Effective anti-submarine warfare requires much more than submarines”

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/effective-anti-submarine-warfare-requires-much-more-than-submarines/>

The article puts the need for comprehensive ASW forces clearly on the table. The Australian SSNs will be part of the solution, not the whole solution.

Note: China is expected to have 60 conventional submarines and 20 nuclear boats by 2030. A good portion of the conventional boats will be air independent propulsion. North Korea has somewhere

around 100 diesel electric submarines including ones capable of launching submarine launched ballistic missiles. Russia has about 26 submarines including ballistic missile submarines, guided missile launching submarines and diesel electric boats that are air independent in the Pacific. Australia has something to worry about in the region.

“CO: In Australia, Marine Rotational Force-Darwin is at the ‘Cutting Edge’ of Force Design”

<https://news.usni.org/2023/08/08/co-in-australia-marine-rotational-force-darwin-is-at-the-cutting-edge-of-force-design>

This is the best summary of the expeditionary USMC role in the Australian far east that I have seen. The US is now embedded in this country. I think the next evolution will be a joint USN-RAN submarine support facility in Fremantle.

“Will China target Australia and how would Australia respond?”

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/will-china-target-australia-and-how-would-australia-respond/>

This is another article that considers the question of whether the Chinese would conduct a first attack on Australia. I doubt that anyone would seriously see the Chinese as not being prepared to initiate such an attack on Australia.

“The ‘number 8 wire’ days for NZ’s defence force are over – new priorities will demand bigger budgets”

<https://theconversation.com/the-number-8-wire-days-for-nzs-defence-force-are-over-new-priorities-will-demand-bigger-budgets-211182>

Our NZ cousins face similar defence issues to us. It will be interesting to see how they deal with this.

“Ukrainian troops left 'underprepared' by NATO training as instructors don't understand the type of warfare or the enemy, report says”

<https://www.businessinsider.com/ukrainian-troops-left-underprepared-by-nato-training-report-2023-8>

This situation is sad but should have been foreseen.

*SAC comment:* I am not sure this is entirely true. They were not given the kit to make NATO operational ideas work. Ukraine has shown resiliency and innovative skill far beyond our skill sets. Russian ops have been lackadaisical and unable to stop Ukraine ops in the longer term. Individually, it is true as they only had a short period to learn, weeks, not months. This is realistic. It is Western expectations not being met, not Ukrainian.

*Reply from Australia:* From a motivation perspective, the power is with the Ukrainians. They are fighting for the survival of their country and their lives.

“New Zealand’s National Security Strategy: Greater regional presence, Aussie ties, and questions”

<https://breakingdefense.com/2023/08/new-zealands-national-security-strategy-greater-regional-presence-aussie-ties-and-questions/>

There is an awakening in NZ. It will be interesting to see how this develops into the future.

“The future of the RAN’s surface combatant force”

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/the-future-of-the-rans-surface-combatant-force/>

The article is almost equally applicable to Canada. What does a country want a navy to do and how is the job to be done? Given the location of Australia, I think the answer is easier to determine down here.

“PHNSY & IMF to Support UK/US Subs at HMAS Stirling”

<https://seawaves.com/2023/08/03/phnsy-imf-to-support-uk-us-subs-at-hmas-stirling/>

The nuclear submarine support structure for the RAN becomes a bit clearer in the article.

“Japan’s Defence White Paper: Making the Case for Change”

<https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/japans-defence-white-paper-making-case-change>

Not Australia or New Zealand but very appropriate.

### **United States**

A US Senator, Tommy Tuberville of Alabama, is holding up the promotions and appointments of over 300 senior positions including three members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. His opposition is based on the US military paying pregnant service personnel to travel to other states to receive an abortion. The military would pay all the expenses. His position is that it a misuse of taxpayers’ dollars. His position has already cost the state the new Space Force headquarters so far. His actions are also complicating postings as female soldiers are not inclined to go to states not providing for safe abortions. It is having an overall effect on military readiness. He has support of the Congressional Republicans. It is an anomaly within the US system that one senator can cause such a major problem for the military.

### **Moldova**

Moldova has expelled twenty-two Russian diplomats and twenty-three technical support staff from the Russian embassy in Chisinau, the capital of Moldova. The main reason for this expulsion was because of Russia's ongoing attempts to destabilize the government of Maia Sandu. It also brings the Russian presence in the Moldova capital to the same size as Moldova's embassy in Moscow, twenty-five personnel including ten diplomats and fifteen support staff. It will further complicate an already tense relationship between the two countries. It does make sense given Moscow's attempts to bring in persons known to be members of irregular military groups including Wagner.

### **Belarus**

Remnants of Wagner are now located in Belarus. They have been used by the Belarus military to train Belarus military personnel in recent changes to tactics and in familiarity with new types of weapons. There was also thought that Wagner troops might be used to create a situation on the Suwalki Gap area, the route used to connect Belarus to Kaliningrad as well as connect Poland to the three Baltic NATO members. As a result, Poland has greatly increased its presence along the Belarus-Polish border and as well Lithuania will be closing two entry points. The leader of Belarus stated this week that he wishes to continue discussions with the Polish government and the EU, thus taking a more conciliatory tone. This is a vastly different tone from the announcement of Belarus gaining Russian nuclear weapons. Most Russian aircraft including twenty fixed-wing assets and nineteen helicopters left Belarus in the past two weeks. Belarus is ill-prepared to deal with any incidents.

Poland is the host to 1.2 million Ukrainian refugees and is the also the supporter of the Belarus opposition. It is little wonder that Lukashenko is trying very hard to remain on the better side of Poland.

### **Russia-Ukraine War**

The war continues at a slow grinding pace with massive losses in men and material on both sides. Ukraine's offensive is continuing with slow incremental successes. Russia's ability to continue logistics support is under constant attack especially in the south as Ukraine destroys or damages key bridges especially from the Crimean peninsula. They also have had considerable success this week against air bases in Crimea with Russia losing a number of fighter aircraft. The Kerch bridge has been attacked at least twice more with Ukraine using old SA-2 missiles re-rolled from air defence to a

surface-to-surface weapon. It is believed one may have hit the bridge.

The overall effect on Russian forces is the loss of artillery support. The number of rounds fired earlier in the war was over 20k rounds per day. Attacks on ammunition storage sites and loss of suitable resupply routes have now lowered this number to below 10k per day. The rainy season will begin in the early fall turning a good portion of Ukraine into a morass preventing either side from making headway. Time is short and a vital hit is unlikely at this point.

Ukrainian troops have apparently breached the first line of defence in the south but whether that makes any long term difference is another question. Note: Ukraine has made a major breach and is proceeding south. It appears from early reporting that Russia used a sizeable portion of its local reserves and has limited capacity to seal the breach in the immediate term. Time will tell if this is actually significant.

The other big story here is that Russia allegedly boarded a ship bound for a Ukrainian port. There are varying stories about this event and there is doubt whether the event actually occurred as stated. The bottom line is that it has had a very chilling effect on local shipping and there is a backup of ships in Turkish waters. It is also bound to have an effect on insurance rates for vessels attempting to sail to Black Sea ports. Will NATO react to essentially a Russian blockade that could hamper ships travelling to Romanian or Bulgarian ports? What would a NATO response look like?

The other effect is that badly needed food supplies remain unavailable for export to other nations particularly in Africa but possibly China as well because of severe floods affecting China's ability to feed itself in the short term. This ongoing conflict will have a negative effect across the world. It will cause the movement of people to safer, more abundant areas whether folks like it or not.

On another note, Russia's currency, the ruble, has fallen in value to 100 to one USD. Before the start of the war in 2014, the normal rate was reasonably consistent at around 30 to 1. Russia used most of its currency reserves to maintain a rate after the sanctions were imposed, the rate climbed to around 60 to 1. As this currency reserve became depleted the currency has taken a more rapid fall to its present 100 to 1. In a *Moscow Times* picture from earlier this week, an exchange shop was offering 106 to 1 USD and more than 115 to 1 for a Euro. Russia's economy is not healthy, it will continue to fall. Where it will stop is unknown.

## **Niger**

Niger's recent military coup has caused ripples across Africa and beyond. There have been several recent coups in West Africa including Mali and Burkina Faso. There has been an attempt by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to have the elected president reinstated. The coup leader, General Abdourahmane Tchiani, and his supporters will not stand down. The general, the former commander of the Presidential Guard, stated through the former prime minister that he was open to negotiations with ECOWAS.

The cause of the coup is suggested to be that the President Mohamed Bazoum was going to get the general to retire and it is suggested that this was the catalyst for the event. The other possibility is the role of the Wagner group and the government of Russia having a hand in the toppling of the democratically elected government. Having a disgruntled unhappy general was the perfect ploy. The junta is supported by the coup leadership in both Burkina Faso and Mali who have also stated that they will militarily support the coup leaders in Niger if ECOWAS takes a military approach. Russia through the Wagner Group has relations with fourteen of the continent's 54 countries. It is thought that

Russia will use its new found leverage to cause further mayhem in the continent as a method to gain sanctions relief. This is not over and time will tell whether Russia will succeed.

## **China**

China's economy is in a serious situation. The current situation is a product of corruption within the Communist Chinese Party, poorly executed policies, poor central planning and a lack of understanding of the needs of the private sector and its role within the Chinese economy, a loss of foreign investor confidence, and poorly written and executed security legislation. These all have had an impact, however further to these problems, there are indications that the actual structure of the economy is not healthy. One example is that the unofficial banking system which operates more on a "gentlemen's agreement" rather than in a transparent regulated manner is much larger and in greater trouble than the official figures. Several Western commentators have suggested that none of the official Chinese figures can be trusted and that the economy is in much worse shape than previously thought. On another point, China's yuan lost its value against the USD and is now trading at 7.2 yuan to one USD, down from 6 to a USD three months ago; not a good sign. China's economy is expected to survive in the longer term but there may be more unpleasant surprises.

More recently, infrastructure failures coupled with major natural weather events have caused massive flooding throughout the north. It was compounded by the release of waters from overflowing reservoirs with little or no notice to those downstream. This killed an unknown number of citizens and destroyed businesses and crops in order apparently to save the capita, Beijing, which was flooding at the time.

China has ramped up air and naval exercises in the Taiwan Straits and are supposedly getting closer to Taiwan. China has also become a major issue in the Philippines as they try to remove a scuttled former landing ship of the Philippines Navy on the Second Thomas Shoal. The ship is aground as an outpost on the shoal well within the Philippines Exclusive Economic Zone. The Philippines' position has been upheld by the International Court. China illegally claims nearly the entire South China Sea without any real claim. A Chinese Coast Guard vessel used water cannon against Philippines' resupply vessels this past week. Manila summoned the Chinese ambassador after the incident. China maintains it has the right to protect its sovereignty...based on a bogus claim.

## INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- On 7 August 2023, the Belarussian Ministry of Defence announced that the 6th Separate Guards Mechanised Brigade (6 SGMB) would conduct an exercise in the Grodno area of north-western Belarus, near the Polish and Lithuanian borders.
- The ministry said that the exercise intended to incorporate lessons learnt by the Russian military in Ukraine. There is a realistic possibility that the Belarussian troops will be joined by a small number of Wagner Group advisors acting in a training role.
- These specific exercises are highly likely part of the Belarussian military's routine training cycle. 6 SGMB's home garrison is in Grodno, and it is unlikely that the formation is currently deployed with the enablers it would need to make it combat-ready. However, Russia is almost certainly keen to promote Belarussian forces as posturing against NATO.

## INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- Russia has likely redeployed airborne forces' (VDV) units from the Kherson region to the heavily contested Orikiv sector in Zaporizhzhia Oblast. The 58th Combined Arms Army (58 CAA) has been in combat facing Ukrainian assaults since 4 June 2023.
- As early as 11 July 2023, the then commander of 58 CAA was sacked, likely partially because of his insistence that elements of his force needed to be relieved.
- Reports suggest that the 70th and 71st Motor Rifle Regiments have faced particularly intense attrition and heavy combat on the front line. There is a realistic possibility that the arrival of VDV will finally allow elements of these regiments to be pulled out for rest and recovery. However, the redeployment will likely leave Russia's defences near the east bank of the Dnipro River weaker, where they are increasingly harassed by Ukrainian amphibious raids.

## INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- The Wagner Group is likely moving towards a down-sizing and reconfiguration process, largely to save on staff salary expenses at a time of financial pressure.
- Since the abortive mutiny of June 2023, the Russian state has acted against some other business interests of Wagner owner Yevgeny Prigozhin. There is a realistic possibility that the Kremlin no longer funds the group.
- If the Russian state no longer pays Wagner, the second most plausible paymasters are the Belarusian authorities.
- However, the sizable force would be a significant and potentially unwelcome drain on modest Belarusian resources.

## INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- Over the last week, there has been an uptick in small-scale combat along the banks of the lower reaches of the Dnipro River.
- Ukrainian forces have worked to raid or set up small bridgeheads at new locations on the Russian-held east bank. This is in addition to expanding the bridgehead Ukraine has maintained near the ruined Antonivsky Bridge since June 2023. Some of these operations likely took advantage of a local Russian force rotation.
- The combatants also continue to skirmish for control of small islands in the Dnipro estuary. Russian commanders face a dilemma of whether to strengthen this area or to deploy troops in the areas of Ukraine's main counter-offensive operations, farther to the east.

## INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- In an online post on 10 August 2023, Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov acknowledged the efforts of the Chechen Vostok Akhmat Battalion in the heavily contested Orhikiv sector in Zaporizhzhia Oblast.
- Kadyrov's comments highlighted the continuing role of one of the premier Chechen units in this key area. Vostok officially comes under the command of the Southern Military District's 42nd Motor Rifle Division which has been active around the village of Robotyne.
- Chechen forces comprise a relatively small but high-profile component of Russian forces in Ukraine. Kadyrov likely heavily promotes his units' roles partially to burnish his credentials as a Putin loyalist.

## INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- Russia has almost certainly started to deploy domestically produced one way attack Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles (OWA-UAVs) based on Iranian Shahed designs. Russian forces have been importing Iranian-made systems since September 2022.
- Indigenous manufacturing will likely allow Russia to establish a more reliable supply of OWA-UAVs. The performance of these weapons has been variable and Ukraine has proved effective in neutralising the majority of incoming OWA-UAVs.
- Russia likely aims for self-sufficiency in OWA-UAVs in the coming months. However, in the interim, Russia remains reliant on components and whole weapons from Iran, primarily shipped via the Caspian Sea.

## INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- Despite the consistent pressures of war, Ukrainian efforts to build up fuel stockpiles will likely be successful in ensuring that it will have sufficient fuel reserves during the approaching winter period.
- Ukraine has been effective in mobilising its mining sector to maintain output, ensuring a continuous supply of coal is available for thermal power and heating plants in the winter, with substantial gas stocks providing a further reserve.
- Despite Russian attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure likely continuing this winter, Ukraine demonstrated last winter that it has the skilled workforce and expertise needed to operate and maintain the power network, even in wartime conditions.

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