



## Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia Dispatches 24 November 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).

### **Home Dispatches December 2023**

Submissions for the December 2023 edition of our internal quarterly are now being taken. If you have something for *Home Dispatches*, please email to RUSI(NS).

#### **Events:**

**New: 28 November**, Tuesday - King's College London Wargaming Network presentation "Naval Wargaming Beyond the Classroom." 1300-1430 AST. Online. To register:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/naval-wargaming-beyond-the-classroom-tickets-758822657997>

**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>.

**23 January**, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation "Wargaming's Influence on U.S. Navy Tactical Doctrine, 1906-1941." 7-9 pm AST. Online. To register:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wargamings-influence-on-us-navy-tactical-doctrine-1906-1941-tickets-6397270999>

**New: 17 January**, 2024 – RUSI(NS) Distinguished Speaker Dr Jonathan Fowler, Saint Mary's University, "The Historical Archaeology of Halifax's Earliest Defences." 1300-1430. In-person. Royal Artillery Park Officers' Mess.

Pre-event reading: Cemetery that tells of Halifax's naval history hides in plain sight

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/cemetery-naval-history-halifax-1.6901190>

**New: 21 February**, Wednesday - Distinguished Speaker MGen S.Y. Ménard, RCAF Chief Fighter and NORAD Capability (CFNC), speaking about the Future Fighter Capability Project (F-35 procurement) and about the RCAF Centennial. 1300-1500 Atlantic time. Via Zoom. Details to follow.

**22 February 2024**, Thursday - Royal Alberta United Services Institute presentation "Beyond Greed: How Corruption Threatens Global Security" with journalist and political advisor Sarah Chayes. 6-7 pm MST (9-10 pm AST). Online. For more info and to register: <https://rausi.ca/info-events/rmcscd/622-beyond-greed-how-corruption-threatens-global-security>

### **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/>

**New:** Canadian Marine Industries and Shipbuilding Association *On Watch*, 22 November 2023 <https://www.cmisa.ca/cpages/on-watch-current>

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

Military Institute of Windsor *Communiqué*, Volume XLI, Number 10, November 2023

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

Naval Association of Canada Ottawa Branch September 2023 Speaker's Evening recording "Canadian Sea Power in the Wake of Changing Geopolitics" with Dr Rob Huebert <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfPImxlyZqg>

Royal Alberta United Services Institute *Dispatches*, November 2023 <https://www.rausi.ca/component/acym/archive/225-rausi-dispatches-november-2023>

Royal Canadian Artillery Association *The Canadian Gunner News* 26 October 2023

Royal Canadian Logistics Service Newsletter *The Logistician* September 2023 <https://sway.office.com/pA4cFB1V3YMF4WNl>

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

Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies New South Wales *Newsletter*, Issue No.87 August 2023

Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver Island *Newsletter*, Volume 55, 3rd Quarter 2023

**New:** Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (Australia) *Defence Update*, Volume 21, Issue 8, 20 November 2023

Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (Australia) *Quarterly Newsletter*, Volume 22, Issue 3, September/October 2023

**New:** Vancouver Artillery Association and Royal United Services Institute Vancouver *Members News* 21 Nov 2023

Veterans Affairs Canada *Salute!*, October 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).

Veterans Affairs CA @VeteransENG\_CA 14 Nov posted and RUSI(NS) reposted: Planning to build, restore or expand a war memorial in your community? Apply today for Community War Memorial funding via the Commemorative Partnership Program! Learn more about application deadlines: <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/commemorative-events/commemorative-partnership/community-war-memorial> #CanadaRemembers (Community War Memorial)

"Community War Memorial funding supports the construction, restoration or expansion of a community war memorial."



LGen J.J.M.J. Paul, CCA / CAC @Army\_Comd\_Armeeposted Nov 17: Thanks to @CICHalifax and @RUSI\_NS for the invitation. I appreciate the opportunity to share our challenges and show off the creativity and strength of our people. #StrongProudReady.

RUSI(NS) quoted: Honoured to host Distinguished Speakers Lieutenant-General Paul @Army\_Comd\_Armeeposted @CanadianForces speaking about @CanadianArmy & Colonel Willis @usairforce speaking about @NORADCommand & @USNorthernCmd. Collaborative event with @CICHalifax. Very informative talks!



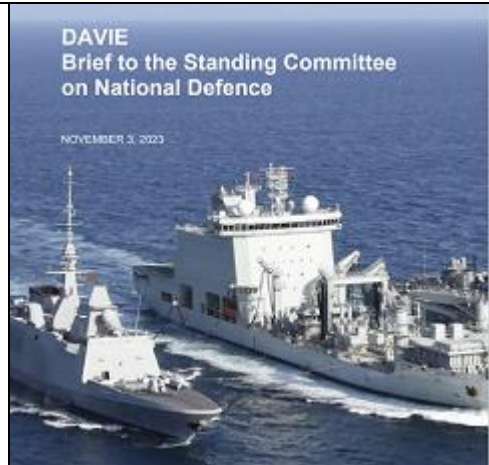
CHEK News @CHEK\_News Nov 18 posted: Top general worries about maintaining Pacific fleet on current budget 'trajectory' <https://cheknews.ca/top-general-worries-about-maintaining-pacific-fleet-on-current-budget-trajectory-1178031/>

RUSI(NS) quoted: To be clear, both Maritime Forces Pacific MARPAC & Maritime Forces Atlantic MARLANT deploy frigates & other ships in support of CAN Indo-Pacific Strategy. Flexibility of seapower. That said, poor state of @RoyalCanNavy ships & lack of people limits gov't options



Davie @chantierdavie 21 Nov posted: Davie's response to the parliamentary Standing Committee on National Defence: <https://bit.ly/47F30Ir>

RUSI(NS) quoted: .@ChantierDavie "Brief to the Standing Committee on @NationalDefence" 3Nov23  
<https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/441/NDDN/Brief/BR12715397/br-external/ChantierDavieCanadaInc-e.pdf>  
Expounds value of shipbuild exports. Recommendations for 🇨🇦 National Shipbuilding Strategy #NSS @RoyalCanNavy @CoastGuardCAN @PSPC\_SPAC @Transport\_gc @HoCCommittees



"Canada can't defend democracy when our military's out of service half the time" <https://nationalpost.com/opinion/john-ivison-canada-cant-defend-democracy-when-our-militarys-out-of-service-half-the-time> Many different ways to measure readiness, many don't provide entire picture. But increasingly @CanadianForces appears would be challenged to do missions desired by 🇨🇦 gov't



Lee Berthiaume @leeberthiaume 22 Nov posted and RUSI(NS) reposted: Internal DND report paints grim picture of Canadian military's operational shortcomings, aging equipment, cultural crisis: <https://hilltimes.com/story/2023/11/22/operational-shortcomings-aging-equipment-and-culture-in-crisis-new-dnd-report-depressing-reading-of-state-of-military-say-mps/403724/> via @thehilltimes  
(Operational shortcomings, aging equipment, and culture in crisis: new DND report a 'depressing reading' of state of military, say MPs)



Hybrid CoE @HybridCoE Nov 20 posted: How should states and the international community counter the use and abuse of international law in Russian military training and exercises and their strategic use for geopolitical influence? Our latest publication by Jouko Lehti from @Puolustusvoimat offers insights: 1/4

- 1) Diplomatic and political efforts should always be at the forefront.
- 2) At the national level, states may use their domestic legislation to better prepare for the use and abuse of international instruments. 2/4
- 3) Close cooperation between national authorities in exchanging information and coordinating activities is essential.



4) Regional actors such as the OSCE, the EU, and NATO must be employed as an effective response. 3/4  
5) Counterefforts must always be based on full respect for international law, and the goal must always be the maintenance of international peace and security. 4/4  
RUSI(NS) quoted: "Use and abuse of international law: Russian military training and exercises in its foreign relations"  
<https://www.hybridcoe.fi/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/20231120-Hybrid-CoE-Working-Paper-27-Russian-military-exercises-WEB.pdf>

"U.S. government pushes Canada to approve \$8-billion P-8 aircraft purchase"  
<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/defence-watch/u-s-government-pushes-canada-to-approve-8-billion-p-8-aircraft-purchase> "...decision will be based on offered capability, availability, pricing & benefits to CAN". Good if that is sequence of priority



**“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).

**Minister Blair and Minister Petitpas Taylor announce \$2.25 million in funding to honour the legacy of No. 2 Construction Battalion**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2023/11/dedicated-funding-to-commemorate-the-legacy-of-no-2-construction-battalion.html>

"The DND/CAF will make \$2.25 million available over five years for commemorative activities, educational materials, and community war memorials that commemorate No. 2 Construction Battalion legacy, the only all-Black battalion-sized formation in Canadian military history."

More at: "No. 2 Construction Battalion: A Short History & an Apology" (<https://rusi-ns.ca/no-2-construction-battalion/>).



### Huge drop in 'Militarily Useful' British vessels

<https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/huge-drop-in-militarily-useful-british-vessels/>

"Defined as civilian ships that can be requisitioned under the STUFT (ship taken up from trade) protocol to support the UK Armed Forces, these vessels are vital for national defense and emergency response operations."



Does Canada have a list of ships that can be requisitioned (apparently as a 'public order' under the Emergencies Act) in times of emergencies, confrontation and conflict? What is the definition used in Canada to identify such ships? "Military-useful" can cover a huge range of vessels, depending on the use envisioned. What staff checks have been conducted, plans made and validated, wargames and exercises conducted? What organizations are there that bring military staff and ship operators together?

Canada is a maritime state, isolated on the continent away from where most operations will occur. To contribute to alliances and coalitions, we would have to get there. That means access to the types of ships that, in Canada and other than one-two navy replenishment oilers and a few other government ships, are in civilian hands. That is likely recognized in military planning circles, but does the civilian leadership and general public appreciate the state of the capability and what it means for government options?

The November 2023 article above echoes a September 2021 article "Significant drop in number of 'militarily useful' British vessels" (<https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/significant-drop-in-number-of-militarily-useful-british-vessels/>).

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The report: UK armed forces equipment and formations 2023

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-equipment-and-formations-2023/uk-armed-forces-equipment-and-formations-2023>

### Canada's CyberSecure Certificate Program Was a Misfire — One We're Already Repeating

<https://www.cigionline.org/articles/canadas-cybersecure-certificate-program-was-a-misfire-one-were-already-repeating/>



Apparently Canada is launching a cybersecurity certification for defence contractors. This is the second time this government has tried to establish a cyber security program. Without visible political support, without significant advertising, many defence contractors may not hear about the program, never mind understanding its importance. Canada's law makers seem reluctant to address any aspect of cyber security. If our politicians cannot or will not address cyber security it will be difficult to make contractors understand why they must take it seriously. It is highly likely that this program will do no better than its predecessor.

Canada is becoming to cyber security what the U.S. is to gun legislation. ... The perfect example of what NOT to do.

### **Treacherous Thoroughfare: Suspected Russian Mines Damage Third Black Sea Ship in a Month**

<https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/world/treacherous-thoroughfare-suspected-russian-mines-damage-third-black-sea-ship-in-a-month/ar-AA1k8KMK>

16 November: "Maritime experts and Ukrainian government sources allege that a grain-laden merchant tanker has been damaged during its journey through the Black Sea."



Mine warfare remains significant as a naval tactic with strategic consequences. Canada needs to retain what it has as mine countermeasures capabilities, mostly Kingston-class ships and dive units, and develop more and better capabilities, e.g., underwater drones. In addition, a mine laying capability should be (re)developed for defensive purposes in Canadian and alliance waters.

### **The Era of Total U.S. Submarine Dominance Over China Is Ending**

<https://www.wsj.com/world/china/us-submarine-dominance-shift-china-8db10a0d>

"Now, China is narrowing one of the biggest gaps separating the U.S. and Chinese militaries as it makes advances in its submarine technology and undersea detection capabilities, with major implications for American military planning for a potential conflict over Taiwan."



Canada needs:

1. a capable submarine force soon. That would be twelve boats for our three oceans and global deployments, in-service now, likely meaning a Japanese or South Korean design.
2. a capable, currently flying, maritime patrol aircraft. The US P-8 Poseidon meets those criteria. Anything not already flying and proven would likely take too long to field and likely would cost more.
3. to resurrect its sea bottom sound surveillance capability to provide coverage of our three oceans.

Russia is an air/land battle. China would be an air/sea battle. Can Canada afford to do both? The Australians are basically realigning for air/sea knowing that their small army could be replaced by a fraction of a US Marine Corps Expeditionary Force on very short notice if called upon.

### **The Liberals' defence policy hits a fiscal wall**

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/defence-policy-canada-bill-blair-fall-economic-update-1.7034308>

The Canadian Armed Forces is "currently unable to conduct multiple operations concurrently per the requirements laid out in the 2017 Defence Policy. Readiness of CAF force elements has continued to decrease over the course of the last year, aggravated by decreasing number of personnel and issues with equipment and vehicles."



There needs to be more public discussion about the readiness of the CAF, starting first with what constitutes readiness. Is the Government ensuring the readiness of the Forces to undertake missions

that the Canadian public expect? Is whatever delta (shortcomings) in that readiness visible to the Canadian public, as are the ramifications?

### National Spectrum Strategy

<https://www.ntia.gov/issues/national-spectrum-strategy>

The foundation of this policy, ordered by the US Department of Commerce, is built on enhanced sharing. Although the objective seems common sense and demonstrable in the lab/schoolhouse, there will be considerable pushback from the US Armed Services about sharing their radio frequency (RF) spectrum. There are too many lessons from previous attempts to "share" spectrum and then finding it impossible to remove users when crisis demands arise, especially when small, intermittent, low power devices are in play (e.g., satellite link made inoperable by taxi cab networks and garage door openers). Shutting down low priority users is often easier said than done.



That said, military spectrum usage is incredibly wasteful, with large swaths of bandwidth often idle or only partially filled. Research and development (R&D) offers considerable potential for increased efficiency but with the caveat of a grueling time lag between technology development and in-field/at-sea implementation due to the comms world reality of interoperability being defined by the slowest link (when is Link-11 going to die..?). Changes to waveforms, migration from analogue, software defined hardware, configurable antenna and signal collision avoidance are but a few of the emerging technologies but military spectrum demand is also increasing, probably outpacing the technical advances, so it's not like we're going to see pools of unwanted spectrum emerging that can be reassigned to industry or public services.

Calling the RF spectrum one of America's "most important national resources," the new US strategy (released 13 November 2023) commits itself to innovation built upon RF spectrum utilization based on four pillars, each of which has three subsequent objectives:

- a Spectrum Pipeline created by re-purposed federal spectrum
  - support federal agency missions
  - support private sector innovation
  - govern the pipeline and identify new bands
- Collaborative Long Term Planning
  - establish a persistent planning process
  - develop an evidence-based decision making methodology
  - define and implement spectrum capability requirements
- Technology Development
  - improve efficiency and coexistence (learn to share)
  - increase R&D
  - pursue flexible spectrum usage policies
- Expanded Expertise and Awareness
  - attract, train and grow the spectrum workforce
  - improve policy-maker understanding of spectrum considerations
  - enhance public awareness of RF spectrum usage



## **Other Sources:**

### **#artificial intelligence**

We Need Hard Laws on the Military Uses of AI — and Soon

<https://www.cigionline.org/articles/we-need-hard-laws-on-the-military-uses-of-ai-and-soon/>

### **#artillery**

For 250 Years, US Troops Could Tow Cannons Around the Battlefield.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/for-250-years-us-troops-could-tow-their-cannons-around-the-battlefield-the-war-in-ukraine-shows-they-won-t-have-that-luxury-in-the-future/ar-AA1jaQ4b>

Should the next CAF artillery be towed or self-propelled?

### **#Canadian Armed Forces**

Minister Blair announces defence investments in Halifax at 15th Halifax International Security Forum

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2023/11/minister-blair-announces-defence-investments-in-halifax-at-15th-halifax-international-security-forum.html>

"...Canada is contributing an initial investment of \$26.6 million over six years in support of establishing the North American Regional office for NATO Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) in Halifax by summer 2024." DIANA is on the RUSI(NS) 'target list' to visit.

Not much public yet about the Combatant Training and Integration Centre – Atlantic, also announced by the Minister. The CTIC-A is in support of the Canadian Surface Combatant project.

### **#defence policy**

The future of the RAN's surface combatant force

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

Advice from a chief of the Royal Australian Navy as to what advice to a minister should anticipate from the professionals to help understand the implications of the choices that must be put before government. Surface combatant-oriented but there are lessons applicable to Canada.

### **#Indo-Pacific #submarines**

Submarine Diplomacy - A Snapshot of China's Influence along the Bay of Bengal

<https://features.csis.org/snapshots/china-submarine-diplomacy/>

Does that make submariners diplomats? Should they be on Global Affairs Canada's establishment?

Trade follows the flag? No, trade follows the periscope...

### **#maritime security**

Gray Zone Tactics Playbook: Intrusive Patrolling

<https://www.sealight.live/posts/gray-zone-tactics-playbook-intrusive-patrolling>

### **#Royal Canadian Navy**

Maintaining a Navy

<https://vanguardcanada.com/maintaining-a-navy-an-interview-with-director-general-maritime-programme-management-department-of-national-defence-cmdre-keith-coffen/>

### **#Russia-Ukraine War**

Takeaways From Russia's Missile War On Ukraine

<https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/takeaways-from-russias-missile-war-on-ukraine>

The Sea of Mines: How will the Black Sea mine demining operation affect the region's security

<https://uacrisis.org/en/the-sea-of-mines>

Note the term "mine action mission." No evident whether it is a doctrinal term or the result of a translation.

How Raytheon Rapidly Surged Air Defenses to Ukraine

<https://aviationweek.com/defense-space/missile-defense-weapons/how-raytheon-rapidly-surged-air-defenses-ukraine>

Lessons in expedited equipment procurement.

#### **#drones**

The Latest Russian Drones Fire Lethal Slugs of Molten Metal

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidaxe/2023/11/10/the-latest-russian-drones-fire-lethal-slugs-of-molten-steel/?sh=3782afb51600>

#### **#information operations**

Weaponising weapons deliveries

<https://euvsdisinfo.eu/weaponising-weapons-deliveries/>

#### **#United Kingdom**

Britain's armed forces equipment by the numbers

<https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/britains-armed-forces-equipment-by-the-numbers/>

Would be interesting to read something similar for the Canadian Armed Forces.

*Report: UK armed forces equipment and formations 2023*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-equipment-and-formations-2023/uk-armed-forces-equipment-and-formations-2023>

#### **#warfare**

The Center of Gravity and Dr. Bruce Gudmundsson

<https://thecxfile.substack.com/p/the-center-of-gravity-and-dr-bruce>

A complex topic distilled to the comprehensible.

#### **Other:**

#### **Russia-Ukraine War Observations**

Here are five recent takeaways from academic Franz-Stefan Gady who recently returned from Ukraine:

1. Ukrainian troops' "Morale remains high, but exhaustion among troops and impact [of] attrition on materiel is visible."
2. "The importance of the FPV drone adaption battle and ability to scale FPV production for current and future military operations by both sides cannot be overstated."
3. "This is and will remain an artillery-centric war.," and "ammunition constraints/rationing for most types of ammo are a reality."
4. "Armor and protected mobility remains key for any sort of ground operation," since "No ground assault can happen without mechanized support. This is a lesson we have seen time and again during our past research trips," he added.
5. And finally, "The importance of Starlink for closing of kill-chains and pervasive [surveillance] remains very high."

## **Security Affairs Committee Synopsis**

### **O Canada**

RUSI(NS) has been consistently advocating for the government to specify what are our national interests, the items if not maintained would leave the country much diminished, such as the loss of our Northern territory. A proper national security policy built on a real and permanent structure and not one cobbled together at the last minute as we have currently. A foreign policy that is clear and consistent, that is able to determine friends from adversaries and who to support, and a defence policy that supports all of these other pieces. It is clear that this and other Canadian governments have not taken the time or interest in such issues. In the past, Canada and to a degree the US have had the luxury of oceans and wide air space to really avoid the issue of national defence. The US woke up and started to develop a more comprehensive approach to territorial defence. Canada has sat back and has used the US as our shield, all the while doing the minimum. Now we are unable to do that even. The number 1 national interest is the safety and security of our country, and successive governments have failed to even do this. Canada no longer has the luxury of having time to sort this out, but it must be sorted before the bullets fly.

The fiscal update was presented on Tuesday. It incurred a further debt increase of 38b CAD. Given that the Bank of Canada Tiff Macklem has also stated that "fighting inflation half-heartedly would be a 'huge mistake,'" once again the government has chosen to bribe Canadians with their own tax dollars while potentially increasing costs through inflation. It is not good for Canada in the long run.

One of our biggest issues with re-equipping is politics in procurement. The P-8 procurement is an excellent example where provincial politicians have stuck their oar into an area that is quite clearly a federal responsibility. The Global 6500 as a suggested CP-140 replacement is ridiculous and will likely fail and be totally inadequate for the mission. The P-8 is the only aircraft in production that currently meets the requirements and is available now. Shut everyone up, sign the contract and get the airplanes. This is just one example of many of disastrous procurement issues plaguing the CAF amongst many other issues. Having new state of the art equipment has always been a good draw for recruits.

It was good to hear that CBC finally realized that they were providing false information to the Canadian public. Until Thursday morning they were using raw unproven casualties figures provided by the Hamas regime which sounds horrific until one realizes that about half are Hamas fighters. Having worked with Israelis, I am fully aware that they try virtually everything to avoid civilian casualties. It does not mean individuals don't conduct themselves in a less than honourable fashion. Still, CBC has acted as an amplifier of Hamas propaganda and disinformation.

Canada's lack of action against pro-Hamas protesters is also an embarrassment. Hamas is identified as a terrorist organization; its supporters need to be reminded of this little fact. Action is required.

### **United States**

The US is maintaining four carrier strike groups at sea on operations. It has them conduct multi-carrier operations at the fleet level including with allied aircraft carriers. A multi-carrier strike force immediately changes the equation in any conflict as few countries have this capacity not only to train themselves but ensure that allied forces are able to work themselves into multinational task forces. The US has eleven large carriers plus up to nine assault ships possibly capable of launching F-35B aircraft. No adversary currently has that capacity or anything close to that capability. The Chinese may have more hulls but they lack the skills and capacity to use carriers in operations effectively.

The US has a large number of relatively well trained reserves on top of a highly capable regular military. The US is suffering from recruiting issues but strangely the US Marine Corps has continued to meet the recruiting targets. The Marine Corps is generally accepted as the toughest of the services. They have maintained most of their ability to deter and fight and have taken social change as just an ongoing task. Canada should learn.

### **Things to Watch for:**

An unverified Russian source has suggested that Russian casualties have now exceeded over one million troops killed or wounded. It might explain Russia's current difficulties in finding soldiers. Despite this, Russia has started a new offensive south of Bakhmut near Klishchiivka and around Avdiivka. Russian forces have made some gains although at a cost in manpower and equipment. Even Russian bloggers have suggested that the Putin regime is trying to achieve even a small victory prior to the election. Based on this it is expected that these will continue and Russia will reinforce this effort for the foreseeable future.

Ukrainians have crossed the Dnipro River in force and are gaining ground against relatively small numbers of Russian troops. Although it is more difficult to verify, Russian force's strength is estimated to be around 30k. Keep in mind, Ukraine has destroyed the ability of Russians to reinforce this sector. Russian troops are assessed as less trained and experienced. Ukraine has apparently built at least two pontoon bridges across allowing for logistics support and perhaps the crossing of heavier armour. This will bear watching. It is expected that Ukraine will move to reach Crimea in the relatively near future and Russia will have limited ability to adjust on the battlefield.

Russia has been building up to 100 missiles per month. The general thinking is that they will use them to attack Ukrainian power infrastructure and other key communications and transport facilities. Russia is estimated to have over 1k saved for such operations. Ukraine has promised to respond appropriately and have shown the ability to fly longer range drones as far as Moscow. Ukraine has also had a campaign against industries and facilities within Russia, a campaign which has been highly successful. This will continue and will escalate on both sides.

Mothers Against the War have finally reared their heads in a growing movement against the war. Authorities have tried to restrain the movement but it continues to grow especially farther away from Moscow. Fatalities amongst Russian troops is vastly higher numbers than Afghanistan. Only 15k were killed in that conflict. The full understanding of Russian casualties is not available to the Russian public but there is increasing concern about the casualties based on correspondence with relatives at the front. This is likely to grow and will likely grow slowly at first then increase in size and capability. It is not a good sign for the regime or its potential replacement. It is unlikely that the alternate to Putin will last any length of time if they come from Putin's inner circle. Time will tell but it is something to watch carefully.

The Russian economy is failing. They have done well thus far but eventually the steady drip of sanctions, sabotage and corruption will cause a fairly major failure. China may help but Russia will pay a steep price.

Armenia is selling older Soviet-era equipment to Ukraine including S-200 and 300 missiles. It is thought that Armenia is doing this to spite Russia for its lack of support against Azerbaijan. This is not over and it will get worse.

### **China**

The *Economist* issue for 11 to 17 November has an excellent overview of China's military. It is worth the read for anyone concerned about recent events in relation to most of China's neighbours.

China's economy is continuing its downward trend especially in the property management sector that is failing quickly and without the ability of the national government to take significant action. What action they have taken seems to just add to the problem. It may be the issue that creates conditions for the demise of the Communist Chinese Party as we know it. Now is not the time to invest in China. Watch for the development of internal factions in the near future. Xi is not invulnerable despite his efforts to centralize power.

China is continuing to harass neighbours especially the Philippines. This week a Chinese destroyer used its sonar against Australian divers trying to cut away a fishing net that wrapped around their ship's propellers. China not surprisingly has blamed the Australians despite the Aussies informing everyone of the operation. This was a direct action done purposely by China. They are continuing to ramp up more violent actions against allies in the South China Sea. Expect this to continue and grow in number and violence.



The slide features the Defence Intelligence logo in the top left corner, which includes a crown and a shield. In the top right corner, it reads 'UPDATE ON UKRAINE' and '17 November 2023'. A yellow horizontal bar with the text 'INTELLIGENCE UPDATE' is positioned below the logo. The main content consists of three bullet points on a dark blue background with a faint map of Ukraine.

Defence Intelligence

UPDATE ON UKRAINE  
17 November 2023

**INTELLIGENCE UPDATE**

- For the first time, Russia has likely started using A-50 MAINSTAY D, its Airborne Early Warning and Control aircraft, to identify targets over Ukraine for its SA-21 long-range ground-based air defence missile system. This adds to MAINSTAY's core mission of co-ordinating fighter aircraft.
- Compared to SA-21's usual ground-based radar, MAINSTAY can use its radar to spot adversary aircraft at longer ranges because its altitude allows it to see further around the curvature of the earth.
- Russia has likely expedited integrating MAINSTAY and SA-21 partially because it is concerned about the prospect of Ukraine deploying Western-provided combat aircraft. There is a realistic possibility that Russia will accept more risk by flying MAINSTAY closer to the front-line in order to effectively carry out its new role.

## INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- Over the last week, the most intense ground combat has been taking place in three areas: on the Kupiansk axis, in Luhansk Oblast; around Avdiivka in Donetsk Oblast; and on the left bank of the Dnipro river in Kherson Oblast, where Ukrainian forces have established a bridgehead.
- Neither side has achieved substantial progress in any of these areas. Russia continues to suffer particularly heavy casualties around Avdiivka. Eyewitness reports suggest small uncrewed aerial vehicles and artillery (especially cluster rounds) continue to play a major role in disrupting the attacks of both sides.
- As colder winter weather sets in earnest in eastern Ukraine, there are few immediate prospects of major changes in the frontline.

## INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- Russia is likely considering bringing the Soviet-era M-55 MYSTIC B high altitude reconnaissance aircraft back into service. With an operating ceiling of over 70,000 feet, the aircraft has been recently employed as an earth-sciences research platform. However, it has been observed carrying a military reconnaissance pod, developed for employment on Russian fighter aircraft.
- A critical flaw in Russian procurement strategy has been its failure to establish an adequate Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) capability. This is critical for the timely and accurate prosecution of targets by air, sea, and ground forces.
- There is a realistic possibility that the M-55 will return to frontline service to bolster Russia's limited ISTAR capabilities over Ukraine. Operating at high altitudes enables the sensors to work at considerable stand-off range. It is almost certain that the aircraft will conduct missions against Ukraine from the relative safety of Russian airspace.

## INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- On 7 November 2023, wives of deployed Russian soldiers conducted what was probably the first public street protest in Moscow since the invasion of Ukraine. The protestors gathered in the central Teatralnya Square and unfurled banners demanding the rotation of their partners away from the frontline.
- Since February 2022, social media has provided daily examples of Russian wives and mothers making online appeals protesting against the conditions of their loved ones' service. However, Russia's draconian legislation has so far prevented troops' relatives from coalescing into an influential lobbying force, as soldiers' mothers did during the Afghan-Soviet War of the 1980s.
- Police broke up the Teatralnya Square protest within minutes. However, the protestors' immediate demand is notable. The apparently indefinitely extended combat deployments of personnel without rotation is increasingly seen as unsustainable by both the troops themselves and by their relatives.

## INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- Between 18-19 November 2023 Russia launched around 50 Iranian-designed Shahed one way-attack uncrewed aerial vehicles, primarily towards Kyiv. These were launched in waves on two axes – from the Kursk to the east, and from Krasnodar to the south-east.
- One of Russia's objectives was likely to degrade Ukraine's air defences, to shape the battlespace ahead of any concerted winter campaign of strikes against Ukraine's energy infrastructure.
- Russia has now refrained from launching its premier air launched cruise missiles from its heavy bomber fleet for nearly two months, likely allowing it to build up a substantial stock of these weapons. Russia is highly likely to use these missiles if it repeats last year's effort to destroy Ukraine's critical national infrastructure.

## INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- In southern Ukraine, fighting has continued around the village of Krynky where Ukrainian marines maintain a bridgehead on the east bank of the Dnipro River.
- The ground fighting has been characterised by confused, dismounted infantry combat and artillery exchanges in complex, wooded terrain. Ukraine has made particularly effective use of small attack uncrewed aerial vehicles, while the Russian Air Force is conducting significant numbers of sorties in support of frontline troops, predominantly launching munitions from beyond the range of Ukraine's air defences.
- The fighting around Krynky is on a smaller scale than some major battles of the war but will be considered highly unfortunate by Russian leaders. Russia withdrew from the west bank of the Dnipro River a year ago, almost certainly aiming to hold Ukrainian forces west of the river, keep the sector quiet, and free up Russian forces elsewhere.

## INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- On 14 November 2023, a select group of Wagner veterans were issued with official veteran identification documents. This marks the first time Wagner personnel have been officially recognised as veterans.
- The Russian Ministry of Defence has established a new system allowing Wagner veterans to receive veteran identification documents and commensurate bonuses. The Wagner Group was recently subsumed into Russia's National Guard (Rosgvardia) command structure.
- This highly likely signals the rehabilitation of some Wagner elements by the Russian administration. This follows a long period of uncertainty on how the administration would regard Wagner personnel in the wake of the Wagner Group's mutiny and abortive 'March for Justice' in June 2023.