



Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia

Dispatches

15 December 2023

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

Dispatches is a weekly collection of news of interest, including posts to social media by the Institute. Links to articles are checked at the time they are put into *Dispatches* but may be unavailable at a later date or in some countries other than Canada.

Everyone is encouraged to submit links and other content to be included in *Dispatches*. Submissions and feedback are welcome anytime. Email to RUSINSDispatches@gmail.com. Comments to articles can be from members or non-members of RUSI(NS). Any comment in *Dispatches* is the sole opinion of the author and does not necessarily represent the views of the Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia, the Department of National Defence or other government department, the Canadian Armed Forces, or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or other agency.

If you wish to receive *Dispatches* at a different address (i.e., not your work address), please inform RUSI(NS). Past editions of *Dispatches* may be requested by contacting RUSI(NS).

Dispatches 29 December

There will be no 29 December edition of *Dispatches*.



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: 9 January, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation "Oh, The Humanity: Generative AI Imagery in Game Design." 7-9 pm AST. Online. To register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/oh-the-humanity-generative-ai-imagery-in-game-design-tickets-722319094857>.

17 January, Wednesday - 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:

Early Town Defences

<https://hnhps.ca/sites/early-town-defences>

Peninsular Blockhouses

<https://hnhps.ca/sites/peninsular-blockhouses>

The Early Fortifications of Halifax

<https://hnhps.ca/pdf/The-Early-Fortifications-of-Halifax.pdf>

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>

added: Walking Tour of Halifax's Early Defences

<https://hnhps.ca/pdf/Walking-Tour-of-Halifax's-Early-Defences.pdf>

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-639727099977>

30 January, Tuesday - King's College London School of Security Studies presentation "Space power and Irregular Warfare in Space." 5:00-6:30 pm GMT. Online. To register:

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/events/space-power-and-irregular-warfare-in-space>

6 February, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation "Saga: A Sub-threshold Conflict Wargaming System." 7-9 pm AST. Online. To register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/saga-a-sub-threshold-conflict-wargaming-system-tickets-719821885637>

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, 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>

9 May, Thursday - Royal Alberta United Services Institute 2024 Keynote Lecture with LGen (ret) The Honorable Roméo Dallaire, discussing key strategic challenges facing Canadian leadership in the current geopolitical landscape. 7 pm MST (10 pm AST) (start time to be confirmed). Via Zoom. For more info and to register: <https://rausi.ca/info-events/rmcscd/625-romeo-dallaire>

Publications:

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

RUSI(NS) Paper "Is another Cyclone about to form for the RCAF?" by Murray Lee and John McLearn, 26 November 2023, <https://rusi-ns.ca/p8-poseidon/>

RUSI(NS) Comments "White Hat Hackers" by David Swan, 25 November 2023, https://rusi-ns.ca/white_hat_hackers

King's College London Wargaming Network presentation "Naval Wargaming Beyond the Classroom." video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOemWKst2g0>

Canadian Gunner News 30 Nov 2023

Notable: Howitzer Statement of Capability Deficiency for 20 self-propelled howitzers.

New: Canadian Marine Industries and Shipbuilding Association *On Watch*, 6 December 2023
<https://www.cmisa.ca/cpages/on-watch-current>

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

New: Military Institute of Windsor *Communiqué*, Volume XLII, Number 1, January 2023

Royal Alberta United Services Institute *Dispatches*, December 2023
<https://www.rausi.ca/component/acym/archive/226-rausi-dispatches-december-2023>

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

New: Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver Island *Newsletter*, Volume 55, 4th Quarter 2023



New: Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (Australia) *Defence Update*, Volume 22, Issue 3, 11 December 2023





New: Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (Australia) *Quarterly Newsletter*, Volume 22, Issue 4, December 2023

New: Vancouver Artillery Association and Royal United Services Institute Vancouver *Members News* 12 Dec 2023

@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>NATO ACT @NATO_ACT 9 Dec posted and RUSI(NS) reposted: Audacious Wargaming Capability is a modern warfare training solution for #NATO's troops. This cutting-edge solution aims to strengthen the Alliance's efforts in preparing its warfighters to lead, fight & win in any environment. Learn more: https://act.nato.int/article/nato-act-develops-audacious-wargaming-capability/ #WeAreNATO (NATO's Allied Command Transformation Develops Audacious Wargaming Capability)</p>	
<p>David Pugliese @davidpugliese 12 Dec posted and RUSI(NS) reposted: Canadian Army needs to spend \$220 million to replace gear donated to Ukraine, says general https://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/defence-watch/canadian-army-needs-to-spend-220-million-to-replace-gear-donated-to-ukraine-says-general via @ottawacitizen</p>	

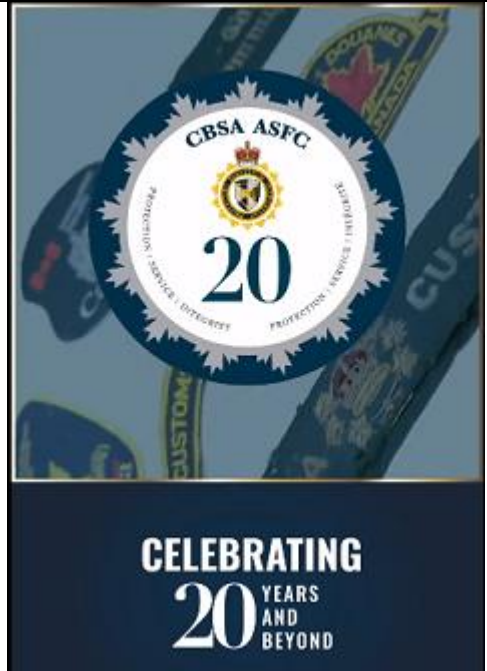
<p>Defence Research and Development Canada @DRDC_RDDC 12 Dec posted: Green tech like wind turbines needs to be adapted to be rugged enough to survive Arctic conditions. The #DefenceIDEaS program has invested \$3.4 million to develop smaller, ruggedized wind turbines for the Arctic. https://canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/programs/defence-ideas/element/competitive-projects/challenges/cold-wind-blows-seeking-wind-turbines-arctic.html #ArcticScience (A Cold Wind Blows: Seeking Smaller, Ruggedized Wind Turbines for the Arctic) RUSI(NS) quoted: Ruggedize, wind turbines, transportable by air/sea/ice road, easy to install/maintain/repair by non-technicians, readily available or manufacture parts, to reduce @CanadianForces & local population reliance on diesel fuel generated power in #Arctic permanent & temporary camps</p>	
<p>CDN Defence Academy/L'Académie cdn de la défense @CDACanadaACD 12 Dec posted and RUSI(NS) reposted: 🇺🇸🇷🇺🇩🇪 @TheWilsonCenter Polar Perspectives No. 14 Sanctions, Shipping, and Sabotage: China and Russia Enter the 'Gray Zone' in the Baltic Sea #GrayZone #Russia #China #BalticSea https://wilsoncenter.org/publication/polar-perspectives-no-14-sanctions-shipping-and-sabotage-china-and-russia-enter-gray</p>	
<p>NATO ACT @NATO_ACT 12 Dec posted and RUSI(NS) reposted: Open cooperation is a key strength of #NATO. As the Strategic Warfare Development Command, @NATO_ACT is working with partners to define a long-term vision for how @NATO & partners can structure their collaboration to address future challenges: https://act.nato.int/article/nato-partnerships/ #WeAreNATO (NATO Partnerships – Supporting Current Relations, and Exploring Future Ones)</p>	
<p>NATO ACT @NATO_ACT 12 Dec posted and RUSI(NS) reposted: Future military commanders will operate in a complex & contested environment. #NATO's Cross-Domain Command approach provides an agile framework of command principles, culture elements & functions to address complex & dynamic conditions. More: https://act.nato.int/article/next-generation-c2 #WeAreNATO (Next Generation Command and Control)</p>	

Canada Border Services Agency @CanBorder 12 Dec posted: Happy 20th birthday #CBSA! We're celebrating our employees and our proud history, building a modern border using new technologies for travel and trade, and protecting the security of our communities.

More on our 20th year: <https://www.canada.ca/en/border-services-agency/news/2023/12/2023-year-in-review-cbsa-welcomed-more-travellers-while-protecting-canadians-from-illegal-guns-and-deadly-drugs.html>

(2023 Year in Review: CBSA welcomed more travellers while protecting Canadians from illegal guns and deadly drugs)

RUSI(NS) quoted: RUSI(NS) proud to link with @CanBorder thru @CanBorderATL, part of our "advancing knowledge of defence, security & safety affairs." Keeping CAN safe & secure. Happy Birthday Canada Border Services Agency. Let there be many more years



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

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CNN took an 11-day cruise through some of the most-contested waters on Earth. Here's what we learned

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/03/asia/canada-south-china-sea-taiwan-strait-mil-dst-intl-hnk/index.html>

"As the captain of a Royal Canadian Navy frigate, Patchell keeps a lawyer and a public affairs officer by his side, because, for Canada – and other Western allies of the United States – this is all about upholding the 'rules-based international order,' and if the Canadian ship violates the law of the sea by intruding in territorial waters, or gives adversaries a chance to spin Ottawa's course as 'provocative,' Patchell's 12-hour cruise would swiftly become an international incident."

Says something that a frigate captain has a lawyer and a public affairs officer by his or her side during an operational activity. The availability of such staff expertise is normally at the level of a commander task group or higher. This commentator recalls training occasions with Commander, US Second Fleet, a vice-admiral with war-starting and nuclear authorities, during which there was always a lawyer and a public affairs officer at the admiral's left and right shoulders.

A warship and what it does is a sign of a state's position on matters, whether it be the freedom of the seas or a diplomatic signal to another state.



Northern Europe Countries Open A Seabed Security Experimentation Center

<https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2023/12/northern-europe-countries-open-a-seabed-security-experimentation-center/>

"The purpose of the SeaSEC is to develop new techniques. It will enable governments to monitor infrastructure in the North Sea and Baltic Sea down to a depth of 30 meters. Think of Internet cables, pipelines for oil and gas, and platforms on which wind turbines are built."



Canada could benefit from standing up a seabed security experimentation centre, with membership from defence, security, safety and industry sectors. There may already be the basis of one in the marine innovation centres (e.g., COVE <https://coveocean.com/>) that already exist.

South Korea plunging deeper into sub export markets

<https://asiatimes.com/2023/12/south-korea-plunging-deeper-into-sub-export-markets/>

"Naval News mentions that (HD Hyundai Heavy Industries) is planning to participate in the Canadian Patrol Submarine Project (CPSP) and has signed a technical cooperation agreement with Babcock Canada."



If the HD HHI's "indigenous mid-size submarine for export markets" meets the requirements of the Canadian Patrol Submarine Project, including cost and especially availability (procurement needs to be expedited), then, yes, let's buy South Korean. And let's buy twelve submarines. Canada has three oceans, three fronts, one of them, the Arctic, fronting Russia.

Other Sources:

#Arctic

'Great Power Competition' and the Arctic: Origin and Evolution in Media, Governmental and Research Institutes Discourses

<https://sjms.nu/articles/10.31374/sjms.192>

Our friends in the North: UK strategy towards the Arctic

<https://committees.parliament.uk/work/7410/the-arctic/news/198697/our-friends-in-the-north-uk-strategy-towards-the-arctic/>

UK Parliament Lords International Relations & Defence Committee

#artificial intelligence

AI in Weapon Systems Committee - Summary - Committees - UK Parliament

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/646/ai-in-weapon-systems-committee/>

AI's impact on war's enduring nature

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0030438723000583>

AI and the future of warfare: The troubling evidence from the US military

<https://thebulletin.org/2023/11/ai-and-the-future-of-warfare-the-troubling-evidence-from-the-us-military/>

The two keys to making the Pentagon's synthetic voice goals a reality

<https://www.c4isrnet.com/opinion/2023/12/12/the-two-keys-to-making-the-pentagons-synthetic-voice-goals-a-reality/>

#Canadian Army

The Canadian Army in Afghanistan

3 volumes book: <https://www.canada.ca/en/army/services/line-sight/articles/2023/11/the-canadian-army-in-afghanistan.html>

#cyber operations

Australia needs to talk more openly about offensive cyber operations

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/australia-needs-to-talk-more-openly-about-offensive-cyber-operations/>

Canada needs to talk more openly about offensive cyber operations.

The Navy Has Good Reason To Focus on Cyber Warfare With China

<https://themessenger.com/opinion/us-navy-cyber-warfare-china-pacific-military-strategy>

"But non-kinetic efforts — deterrence, coercion, reassurance, routine diplomacy — likewise shape strategic competition and warfare."

British intelligence says Canada's cyberspies are 'at the head of the pack'

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-canada-cybersecurity-five-eyes/>

#defence policy

As security threats mount, the holes in Canada's defences can no longer be ignored

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-as-security-threats-mount-the-holes-in-canadas-defences-can-no-longer/>

Mark Norman, Vice Admiral (Ret'd) @Comd_RCN_34 8 Dec posted: As security threats mount, the holes in Canada's defences can no longer be ignored. @acoyn hits this important issue squarely on the head. #cdnpoli

#United Kingdom

Defence Command Paper 2023: Defence's response to a more contested and volatile world

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-command-paper-2023-defences-response-to-a-more-contested-and-volatile-world>

#defence procurement

(US) Defense Acquisition Trends 2023: A Preliminary Look

Comparison: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/defense-acquisition-trends-2023-preliminary-look>

#innovation

Innovation, Revolutions, and Clichés

<https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/articles/learning-lessons-3/>

#landpower

Imagining the Future of Landpower

<https://mwi.westpoint.edu/imagining-the-future-of-landpower/>

Report about book "The Arms of the Future: Technology and Close Combat in the Twenty-First Century" by Jack Watling of the Royal United Services Institute, UK, a frequent and thoughtful commentator about the Russia-Ukraine War and warfare generally.

Polycrisis: The new normal

Speech by General Sir Patrick Sanders, Chief of the General Staff, UK:

<https://chacr.org.uk/2023/12/08/polycrisis/>

#medical

Large-Scale Combat Operations Will Bring New Medical Ethics Challenges

<https://warontherocks.com/2023/12/large-scale-combat-operations-will-bring-new-medical-ethics-challenges/>

#Royal Canadian Navy

Russian Article on State of Canada's Navy

<https://www.mapleleafnavy.com/russian-article-on-state-of-canadas-navy/>

#Russia

Another Budget for a Country at War: Military Expenditure in Russia's Federal Budget for 2024 and Beyond

https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/sipriinsights_2312_11_russian_milex_for_2024_0.pdf

#Russia-Ukraine War

Hundreds of thousands wounded and dead in Ukraine as war grinds on, intelligence suggests

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/russia-ukraine-1.7053035>

US Army embracing remote maintenance beyond Ukraine

<https://www.defensenews.com/digital-show-dailies/ausa/2023/10/09/us-army-embracing-remote-maintenance-beyond-ukraine/>

The High Price of Losing Ukraine

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/high-price-losing-ukraine>

#drones

How an Army of Drones Changed the Battlefield in Ukraine

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/12/06/ukraine-russia-war-drones-stalemate-frontline-counteroffensive-strategy/>

Tank Runs For Its Life Under Constant Barrage Of Attack Drones

<https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/tank-runs-for-its-life-under-constant-barrage-of-attack-drones>

"...a major factor of who wins or loses future fights will be how many low-end drones they can deploy across the battlefield."

#space

A Framework for Building a Civil Reserve Space Program

<https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PEA980-1.html>

#strategy

Bringing the Fundamentals of Strategy to IR

<https://www.militarystrategymagazine.com/briefs/bringing-the-fundamentals-of-strategy-to-ir/>

Military Strategy Magazine @milstrategymag 8 Dec posted: We at Military Strategy Magazine believe a solid grasp of the fundamentals of war and strategy is critical for a true understanding how states and non-state actors interact with one another. War is a fundamental aspect of international relations. Always has been; always will be. And, yet, most IR courses talk around war, as if it were ancillary, something avoidable, an aberration — so long as war isn't studied, it isn't a threat.

#war

It's Not Just Ukraine and Gaza: War Is on the Rise Everywhere

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2023-12-10/it-s-not-just-ukraine-and-gaza-war-is-on-the-rise-everywhere>

#warfare

War Has Changed, and the Army's Conceptualization of Operational Art Must Follow Suit

<https://mwi.westpoint.edu/war-has-changed-and-the-armys-conceptualization-of-operational-art-must-follow-suit/>

Repurposing Precision - Reflections upon the bombing of Gaza

<https://tacticalnotebook.substack.com/p/repurposing-precision>

Other:

Camouflage

H I Sutton @CovertShores 10 Dec posted: Just a useful photo to show the difference between traditional black-painted sides of some ships, and the deceptive camouflage (<http://hisutton.com/Russian-Navy-Deceptive-Camouflage-Overview.html>) applied in the Russo-Ukrainian war



Black paint is attempt at deceptive camouflage against maritime drones (UAV) and satellites

Black paint to hide exhaust stains

Camouflage (Deception?)

Rocket Launcher Disguised As Fuel Truck Seen Firing In Iraq

<https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/rocket-launcher-disguised-as-fuel-truck-seen-firing-in-iraq>

U.S. Central Command @CENTCOM 4 Dec posted: At approximately 2:15 p.m. on Dec. 3, 15 122mm rockets originating in Iraq were fired at the U.S. base Rumalyn Landing Zone in Syria. There were no injuries to personnel or damage to equipment. Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve located the point of origin with uncrewed ISR assets and passed the location to Iraqi Security Forces who moved to and investigated the site. A fuel truck modified to launch up to 20 rockets was located at the site.

A different form of camouflage? More legitimate than hiding fighters in civil ambulances.



#Wargaming

Sebastian Bae @SebastianBae 9 Dec posted (<https://twitter.com/SebastianBae/status/1733473057254031604>): The recent @washingtonpost article on Ukraine highlights both the strengths and weaknesses of #wargaming. It can provide an experiential venue for players to dynamically tackle hard problems. But like other methods -- it can be the victim of meta dynamics & biases. A thread 1/...

Last post of thread: If we plan to fight as a coalition, to operate as an alliance, we must exercise our minds together. To make tough choices. To make mistakes. To learn from each other. If the Interwar NWC Games taught us anything, it is that wargaming is best when iterative and educational.

On that, a senior Ukrainian military official agreed. War-gaming "doesn't work," the official said in retrospect, in part because of the new technology that was transforming the battlefield. Ukrainian soldiers were fighting a war unlike anything NATO forces had experienced: a large conventional conflict, with World War I-style trenches overlaid by omnipresent drones and other futuristic tools — and without the air superiority the U.S. military has had in every modern conflict it has fought.

"All these methods ... you can take them neatly and throw them away, you know?" the senior Ukrainian said of the war-game scenarios. "And throw them away because it doesn't work like that now."

Concept Image

Good to see a concept image for a ship build (or any vehicle) out early. Doesn't matter if later it doesn't match the general arrangement drawing – it's a concept! And people can get the idea of the build.

Interesting, too, that a shipbuilder gets to brief parliament about incoming programs like that. Canada could do with more of the same.





Gabriele Molinelli @Gabriel64869839 7 Dec posted (<https://twitter.com/Gabriel64869839/status/1732718410977382674>): 1st pic is very latest DDX CGI used by Fincantieri to brief Italian Parliament's defence commission on incoming programs. It's unfortunately low quality, but overall configuration seems not to have changed. Possibly, but hard to say for sure, new CGI confirms space for 96 cells.
Thread continues: <https://twitter.com/Gabriel64869839/status/1732719275394171023>

Shearwater Aviation Museum

<https://shearwateraviationmuseum.ca/>

The museum is temporarily closed due to essential building works.

Deception

 Ukrainian Front @front_ukrainian 2 Dec posted: ⚡ The  Lithuanian company Aviatema presented the MLRS M270 inflatable decoy.



Security Affairs Committee Synopsis

O Canada

Canada is not doing well overall. Our healthcare is less than optimal with nearly one in five without a family doctor. Our per capita income has fallen from \$54,966 in 2022 to \$53,247 in 2023 according to the World Bank figures. Our life expectancy has generally plateaued, still a healthy 83.2 but it hasn't been growing and it is expected that Canada will actually drop in its world position to around 27th place according to Madeincanada.ca. Homelessness is at a high not seen since the 1930s with even employed persons being forced into tents and shelters. The national debt has increased substantially and the servicing payments on the debt will soon exceed \$50b CAD. Interest rates are considered high and many folks with recently purchased homes will have difficulties renewing mortgages. There are concerns that many may have to default despite recent government efforts to mitigate this problem

with the banks. Canadian government deficits continue to be extremely high and yet there are proposals to create what might be referred to as "blank cheque programs" which while beneficial in nature hit the economy at a low level using tax payers' money to bribe taxpayers. The dental plan and a pharma care plan sound great but there has no effective planning to determine the second and third order of effects on people and the economy nor potential inflation resulting from such programs. This is not good.

Security is not just about defence and security forces. It goes to the wellbeing, health and sovereignty of the country itself. While some programs might very well be beneficial in the long term, are we sure of this? Healthcare is an excellent example of a blank cheque program that has seen the cost grow exponentially over the years to be the largest single cost after debt servicing from a base of near zero as a government expense. The other issue is that it became a budget item and subject to twists and turns of politics which has led to unequal access for most citizens. Many decisions have been made for political reasons rather than a well thought out plans including how to pay for them. A poor economy is not a good way to start especially not understanding the side effects of programs and dealing with unintended consequences.

Canada needs all parties to develop an agreed understanding of our national interests. From this starting point security, foreign affairs and defence policies can be developed. Defence policy as an example should not be a laundry list but built from a real understanding of the current world situation in conjunction with our allies. No one party has an acceptable answer and security defence and foreign affairs are policies where all the parties have to be in general agreement on the way ahead as most require thought, study, preparation, planning acquisition, training, maintenance, lifecycle management, and disposal in all of these areas and more. One item we can very definitely understand and take from the Communist Chinese Party (CCP) is the need for a comprehensive approach to dealing with the world. China can and will use every item in its "bag of tricks" to achieve an outcome that is beneficial for them. Canada seems to work in silos and often seems at odds with itself. Part of this is because our constitution has ten provinces, three territories, a national government and now 650+ indigenous governments to deal with getting legislation into law. It also means a level of perceived confusion and rancor to the outside world.

Canada voted in favour of a ceasefire in Gaza in the General Assembly of the UN. Canada has shown some concerning trends in its foreign policy; tacit support of Kohistani separatists, de facto support of Hamas, and lack of military support for Ukraine. Hamas is considered a criminal terrorist organization in Canada. It conducted an absolutely barbaric attack on Israel killing or wounding nearly 10k Israelis. Survival of Hamas would constitute a victory from their stand point and therefore any ceasefire allowing Hamas to remain standing in any form before Israel is ready would be to allow that victory for a terrorist organization. The UN agencies themselves have allowed this cancer to develop under their watch and they did nothing to stop the building of urban fortresses which would have been obvious. The UN is as much to blame for the predicament of the Palestinians. Canada should have at the very least abstained in any vote on this issue. De facto support of Hamas will not bring about a solution.

Foreign interference has still not been dealt with in a timely fashion. The newest Commissioner Justice Marie-Josée Hogue was appointed on 7 September 2023. To quote the website of the Commissioner as to her duties:

"The Commission will undertake its work in two phases. The first phase will focus on the interference that China, Russia and other foreign actors may have engaged in, and any impact it may have had on the 2019 and 2021 federal elections. The Commission will also examine and assess the flow of information within the federal government in relation to these issues, and evaluate the actions taken in response.

In the second phase, the Commission will examine the capacity of federal departments, agencies, institutional structures, and governance processes to permit the Government of Canada to detect, deter and counter such interference."

The Commission has just put out correspondence that asks the political parties not to politicize the commission and its findings which of course puts the cart before the horse. Not a good start to say the least.

On another issue, Russia held its 13th Arctic Forum between 7 and 8 December 2023. The key speaker was Admiral Nikolai Yevmenov, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Navy. His comments have large implications for Canada and Denmark. He stated that Russia will be opening the Northern Shipping Route year round and that the Russian 2021 submission to the UN on their Exclusive Economic Zone claims 70% Arctic Ocean. It will claim portions of Canada's and Denmark's EEZ. Russia will be forming an Arctic Fleet based on nuclear ice breakers and submarines which will be formed as a separate entity from the Northern Fleet. Canada's inaction on our Northern sovereignty is finally coming to roost. Our recent efforts as a "post-national country" and our lack of understanding of the "real politik" of dealing with authoritarian regimes will cost us dearly. Action is required now.

United States

The Republican majority in the House of Representatives has voted against a new allocation of military support to Ukraine despite the efforts of President Biden to convince them to do otherwise. The Republicans have refused to pass such legislation unless there is increased support for cross border measures. In the meantime, Ukraine is finding itself without sufficient air defence ammunition to deal with specific types of missile and drone threats, amongst other issues. Europe has stepped up as much as possible but ramping up defence production capabilities takes time and there are some areas such as artillery ammunition where this has fallen short. The US has had the same problems but is continuing to increase production.

USS *Carny* has shot down 22 Houthi missiles and drones fired toward either Israel or foreign-flagged ships. Israeli and French warships have also managed to shoot several targets as well. The Houthis have quite clearly displayed their support for Hamas. It is expected that some form of action will be taken to mitigate the problem by like-minded nations. Initially it was just Israeli-owned ships that were targeted however the Houthis are now effectively blockading the entrance to the Red Sea. USS *Mason* also shot down two missiles Wednesday morning in defence of shipping.

The US vetoed a UN resolution ceasefire for Gaza fighting in the UN Security Council this week. It was the only country to do so although the United Kingdom abstained. A non-binding resolution in General Assembly calling for a ceasefire had 153 countries supporting such a move. The US reiterated the point that Israel has the right to defend itself against the unprovoked attack by Hamas but also cautioned Israel against excessive force and to be careful in targeting to prevent unnecessary civilian casualties. The US and Israeli governments are at odds to a degree on the issue of civilian casualties. Note that Palestinian casualties do not differentiate between actual civilians and fighters. The figure currently used is 18k+. If past experience is any indication, nearly half will actually be fighters and thus the figures are "manufactured" for propaganda purposes. The UN, especially long term organizations in Gaza, are part of the problem; they have been present throughout the building of the Gazan fortress and tunnel system. They have also been present during the development of anti-Israeli education programs. The UN is not a reliable agent in this case.

Moldova

The Moldovan Supreme Court on 5 November 2023 overturned the ban on the Party of Ilan Shor, leader of the Sansa Party also known in the West as the Shor Party. Shor is currently living in Israel. He was convicted for fraud in the theft of up to \$1b USD. He is very pro-Russian and is thought to support Russian disinformation in Moldovan politics. The Government of Moldova will be appealing the Supreme Court's decision. Information provided by balkaninsight.com.

Moldova's inflation rate was down to 5.5%. Both Ukraine and Moldova are making efforts to be able to ascend to the European Union. Keeping control of the country's economy is essential for this to occur.

Belarus

Belarus is currently conducting a crackdown on potential 'troublemakers' paying particular attention to election observers. There are currently 1474 identified political prisoners in Belarus but more than 35k were detained since the 2020 post-election demonstrations. Election observers from the last election are being forced to make 'repentance' videos denying their original comments post-2020. This crackdown is seen as pre-election intimidation on observers for the 2024 election. The regime is making every effort to avoid the repeat of the 2020 problems.

The alternate government headed by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya has stated that the opposition will issue Belarus passports to exiles of the regime. This counters the regime's scheme to force dissidents to return to Belarus to renew passports thus making them vulnerable to regime security forces. The program is supposed to start in 2024. Ms Tsikhanouskaya made the remarks in an interview with the Voice of America on 9 December 2023 while visiting Washington for the start of a strategic dialogue with the US and her own organization called the United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus.

Russia-Ukraine War

The war continues along the front from Kupiansk to the Kherson region in the south. The Avdiikva area seems to be the main target of Russian forces which have launched a large number of attacks against the ruins of the town. The Dnipro crossing to the east side of the river is still ongoing with Ukraine making small gains each day. Neither side seem to have the necessary resources to make a major impact on the war itself. Ukraine continues to be throttled by the off-again, on-again flow of material, especially ammunition. The Kherson region seems to be the area where some success may be possible. Russia also continues to make minor gains but seems to lose some of these newly captured area due to a lack of backup to successful attacks. As winter sets in it is likely this type of back and forth will continue. Ukraine has a slight advantage in its better use of drones for surveillance and attack over the Russians. Russia still seems to be preoccupied with more conventional ground-based attacks by larger groups. The war is a stalemate with the potential for a Ukraine offensive in the far south.

There are increasing numbers of Western media outlets that are suggesting that Ukraine is losing the strategic war. Most of this is based on the belief that the West is losing interest and are more focused on other issues such as China, the Middle east, Myanmar, Venezuela-Guyana and a multitude of issues in Africa. Most of this commentary seems to be an increasing feed of Russian wishful thinking. Europe is increasingly aware that Russia is hoping this is the case. European nations are making every effort to modernize their militaries and ensuring Ukraine gets as much equipment as possible. Articles that portray a lack of interest on the part of the West seem less obvious in fact. The big issue now is the deadlock in the US Congress because the Republicans are asking for border control money that would be attached to any bill providing military support to Ukraine. What is particularly interesting is that most all of this money for Ukraine is spent in the US, not Ukraine, paying US manufacturers to

produce ammunition and equipment and to shipping this material. While Russia may take short term satisfaction it is entirely likely that this will resolve itself before the end of the year, especially when US arms manufacturers realize they are being sidelined by their own Representatives. One point is clear, Russia is not liked by either the Democrats or Republicans but it does not mean they will not "play political games."

There does seem to be a slowdown in the shipment of material as Hungary and truckers in Poland are permitted to stop the transfer of material to Ukraine, at the same time Russia has started its latest missile campaign. Thus far the current attacks have been relatively-speaking unsuccessful. Russia has been able to continue to produce sufficient numbers of missiles to conduct another campaign against Ukrainian power facilities during the winter. Last year Ukraine had an opportunity to import a large number of generators and alternate sources of power to augment the overall system. The campaign against these facilities is unlikely to succeed but it was an ongoing problem for the entire country last winter. The Polish issue will likely clear up once Donald Tusk is sworn in as the next Prime Minister. His relationship with Kyiv is expected to be much better than his predecessor's.

The Russian economy is continuing to decline. Inflation is over 5% and expected to climb. Russian stores are now having shortages of products and oil and gas continue to rise in price. Although employment is nearly full, the Russian government has gone back to industry to provide more soldiers for the Ukraine front which causes further issues such as replacing trained workers with candidates who have other problems such as recently demobilized prisoners given amnesty for completion of their contract or women rejoining the workforce. The Russian government has also used foreign workers as potential sources of new soldiers; even Nepalese citizens have been used who normally are found in the British and Indian Armies and are better known as Gurkhas. Nepal has requested that Moscow stop the use of Nepalese citizens.

Putin on his national call-in program Thursday gloated over the perceived failure of the Ukrainian offensive. His 'success', a limited success, has been purchased with the lives of hundreds of thousands of Russian citizens.

The West has to ask itself: what next? Many countries are rearming and providing as much material as possible. Most are former Warsaw Pact countries, most view their final liberation from the Second World War as 1992. They have no illusions of being part of the Russian World. Others, such as our own country, do nothing as if things will get better by magic. US politicians are using the situation to play politics rather than understanding that this is potentially an existential problem for the liberal democracies. This is being exploited by the countries known as the 'Axis of Evil' (China, Russia, Iran and North Korea) to create their own world order. Putin must lose and lose badly or the liberal democracies will be fighting again shortly, as our grandparents finally realized - authoritarian regimes have to be dealt with effectively. Hope, wishful thinking and head-in-the-sand will never work; it requires thought and action to avoid an even worse outcome. Climate change will not be achieved if nuclear winter is imposed first.

China

China under the CCP is a culturally genocidal authoritarian regime that has occupied Tibet and Eastern Turkistan since 1950, and has acted against the former British colony of Hong Kong (HK). The CCP has failed to live up to the handover agreement. They have steadily eroded the rights of citizens of that city and have mainly eliminated the special place that was the city of HK. Some Western analysts have now stated there is little difference between the former colony and the mainland. Many have already voted with their feet and have left. The dead hand of the CCP has stifled any hope of HK regaining its place as a world financial hub. The CCP has continued its harassment of Taiwan, all the while stating

they hoped they would join peacefully although they will reunify the two entities by force if necessary. They seem confused why Taiwan wouldn't want to join mainland China, especially after watching the fate of HK.

Hong Kong elections were held, slightly over 27% actually voted. Most seats are chosen by the Party and business councils with 20% of the seats being elected by the general public. People selected as candidates have to be approved by the city administration. These candidates are Chinese patriots and therefore not really representative of the people of Hong Kong - the elections are a sham. The city Administrator has hailed the elections as successful and peaceful and it is used as an example of successful democratic system with Chinese characteristics. A true success for Chinese democracy? The answer is China is not a democracy despite its own comments to the contrary. It is a threat to virtually all its neighbours.

The CCP continue to harass religious groups including Christians, Muslims, Falun Gong and Buddhists. Religion is seen as a competitor and therefore a potential threat to the survival of the CCP because it provides a rival that may provide a base for a future opposition. It therefore must be controlled. Religion is not free in China.

As discussed many times this past year the Chinese economy continues to show decline mainly due to the actions of the CCP. One of the worst areas involves the increasing deficits at the local government level. Local governments mainly receive their revenue from land sales to developers who may have to borrow heavily through shadow banking system. This has led to a de facto Ponzi scheme where piles of money are moved between different organizations but it is the same pile. When problems occur it creates a domino effect as loans have to be recalled and company after company/bank starts to fail. Some provinces are currently in receivership and under the supervision of the central government. Some assessments by analysts both in China and the West estimate that at least 12 are near this point or already under central government supervision. Interestingly, the central government is also responsible for most of this problem. The CCP does not like bad news such as unemployment as they view the unemployed as a potential threat to stability. In order to prevent instability, the central government has also directed local governments to hire employees whether they were needed or not thus creating the impression of high employment yet hiding non-jobs or minimalist jobs. People are considered employed if they work for one paid hour per week. The stats look good but they are, to quote a certain politician, "fake news." Unemployment is therefore higher than officially reported.

He Lifeng is considered the party's main economic expert. He has been responsible for the Party's actions to boost citizen confidence and to improve the image of the Chinese economy to potential investors especially from the West. The attacks on private enterprises have been curtailed or at least toned down. The bottom line is that the CCP has no real understanding of the market; their desire is for Party control thus eliminating (from their perspective) financial risk by allowing the Party to control the mechanisms of the market thus preventing issues and allowing the Party to resolve issues. One might also know this as a form of central planning. The Chinese economy is not likely to get better anytime soon and foreign investment, already at a record low, will likely continue to be low and money will leave the country. China despite being a communist government has one of the highest levels of economic inequality in the world. Those with the most are Party members. The main point is the Party is the problem and their inability to resolve the difficulties will cause the instability they are seeking to avoid. Time will tell.

There are other issues such as a lack of rule of law, the national security law update, local corruption, general economic malaise and many others.

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- On 5 December 2023, a Russian Naval Aviation Su-24M FENCER D fighter bomber was highly likely shot down by a Ukrainian surface-to-air Missile (SAM) over the north-western Black Sea in the vicinity of Ukraine's Snake Island.
- Since summer 2023, Russia has continued to conduct high-risk, crewed strike missions against the island. This is likely mainly for messaging reasons because the island has become a symbol of Ukrainian resistance and Russia wants to demonstrate it can project force across the Black Sea.
- The two-man crew was likely lost: the location and operational conditions would make a successful Russian search and rescue mission extremely challenging. Both sides still suffer regular combat aircraft losses. Overall, air defences continue to severely limit the effectiveness of tactical air operations.

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- On the night of 7 December 2023, the Russian Air Force conducted a major wave of strikes towards Kyiv and central Ukraine using its heavy bomber fleet, for the first time since 21 September 2023.
- These aircraft, highly likely Tu-95 BEAR H, likely launched at least 16 air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) from their typical operating area over the Caspian Sea. The missiles were highly likely AS-23a KODIAK, Russia's premier ALCM. Russia has almost certainly been stockpiling these missiles for use in the winter campaign.
- This was probably the start of a more concerted campaign by Russia aimed at degrading Ukraine's energy infrastructure. However, initial reports indicate the majority of these missiles were successfully intercepted by Ukrainian air defence. Despite at least one civilian reported killed, the damage currently appears to have been minimal.

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- Over the last week, the Donetsk Oblast town of Avdiivka has continued to be the scene of the most intense combat on the front. As reflected in official Ukrainian public-release data, on some days approaching 40 per cent of all combat engagements have likely taken place in this small sector.
- The Russian offensives have continued to be characterised by largely dismounted infantry assaults, often by Shtorm-Z penal units.
- Ukrainian units have likely conducted successful local counterattacks, denying Russian forces full control of the village of Stepove. It is here that Russia is attempting one part of a pincer movement to envelop Avdiivka and its heavily defended industrial zone.

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- Russian forces highly likely continue to struggle when fighting at night. Numerous reports from combatants have highlighted this trend since the start of the war; in late November 2023, a social media user claiming to be a Russian soldier serving in Kherson highlighted the shortage of night vision goggles (NVGs) and low-light cameras for uncrewed aerial vehicles.
- NVGs have frequently featured high in the lists of equipment Russian units request from their families and supporters. Ukrainian forces have often been equipped with night vision devices from international partners.
- There is also likely a cultural element to Russia's problem: Russian military training has rarely emphasised night exercises, instead typically building towards set-piece, daylight events to impress visiting senior officers. In contrast, the Russian soldier claimed Ukrainian forces "move mostly at night".

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- On 12 December 2023, Russia launched at least 15 Shahed One Way Attack Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles (OWA-UAV) from the Balaklava district of Crimea. This is a new OWA-UAV launch site to the south of Sevastopol.
- On 5 December, Russian officials claimed to have intercepted 41 Ukrainian UAV attacks on Russian military infrastructure in Crimea including in the vicinity of Cape Chauda. Cape Chauda, south east Crimea, is a known Shahed launch site used by the Russians since early September 2023. Balaklava is now the fifth confirmed OWA UAV launch site being used in Russian operations against Ukraine alongside the sites at Cape Chauda, Yeysk, Primorsko, and Kursk.
- Russia is highly likely dispersing its OWA UAV launch capabilities across several locations as both a force protection measure and to complicate Ukrainian air defence efforts. Russia will likely use additional launch sites in response to Ukrainian attacks, forcing Ukraine to adapt to new transit corridors of these systems.

INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

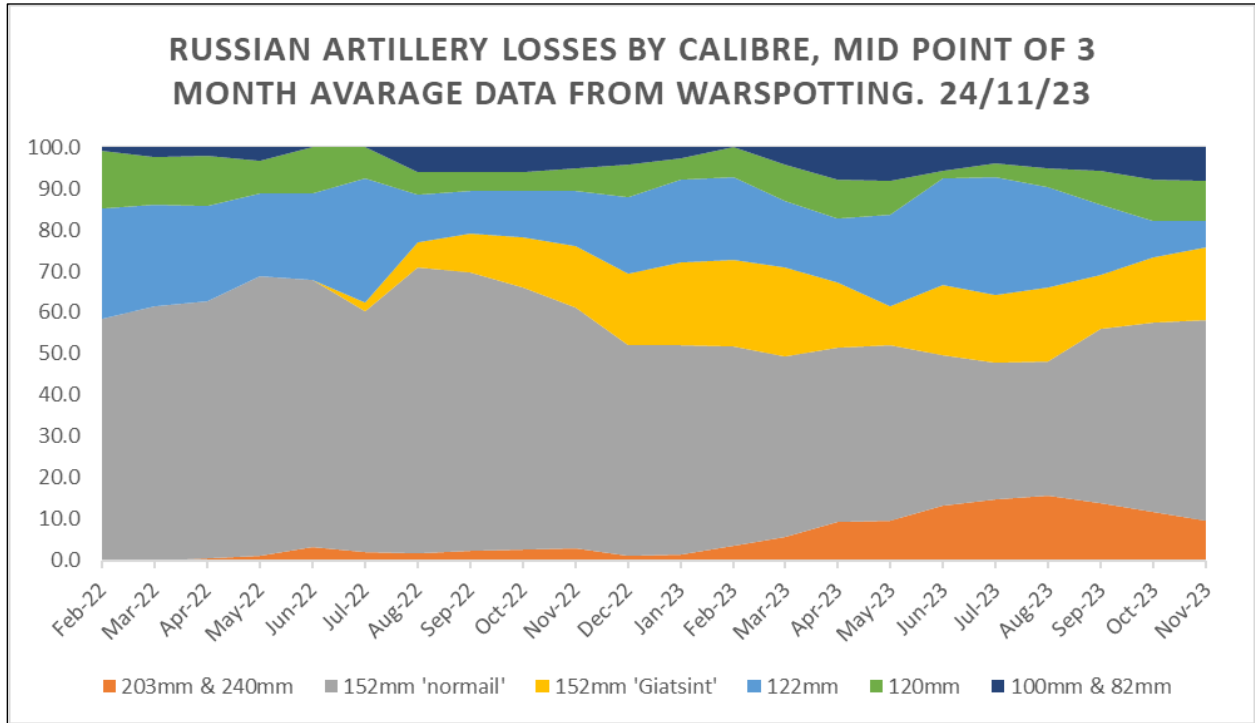
- In early December 2023, the newly-formed 104th Guards Airborne Division (104 GAD) of the VDV (Russia's airborne forces) highly likely suffered exceptionally heavy losses and failed to achieve its objectives during its combat debut in Kherson Oblast.
- The operation took place after the division joined Russia's Dnipro Group of Forces and its attempt to dislodge the Ukrainian bridgehead near the village of Krynyky on the east bank of the Dnipro. 104 GAD was reportedly poorly supported by airpower and artillery, while many of the troops were highly likely inexperienced.
- Following the incident, Russian 'mibloggers' called on the Dnipro Group of Forces Commander, Colonel General Mikhail Teplinsky, to resign. This is a blow to Teplinsky's reputation as one of the more capable Russian field commanders of the war: in his routine role he is also commanding general of the VDV.

Russian Artillery Losses, Russia-Ukraine War

Richard Vereker @verekerrichard1 8 Dec posted

(<https://twitter.com/verekerrichard1/status/1733196193205715312>):

All Russian artillery losses (towed and SPG) combined and then divided by the caliber of the gun, over the war. It shows an interesting pattern: at the start, the normal 152mm accounted for about 70% of all losses, and probably about this proportion of all artillery. From about Feb 2023, the proportion of other calibers increased, I think this was because Russia was running low on normal 152mm ammunition and needed to share the usage amongst calibers. now Russia has asses to North Korean ammunition it will be interesting to see if this changes again. ¼



Russian Naval Losses, Russia-Ukraine War

Frederik Van Lokeren @KaptainLOMA 8 Dec posted: New overview of Russian naval losses in the Black Sea during the Russian-Ukrainian war. Karakurt class corvette Askold is now labelled beyond repair and thus destroyed.

Editor: Often see graphics for deployed ships, not so often see one depicting losses.



Holiday Greetings are coming in from our colleagues and contacts:

