



Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia
Dispatches
23 February 2024

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 periodic 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 RUSINovaScotia@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).

RUSI(NS) Annual General Meeting

Members:

The 96th Annual General Meeting of RUSI(NS) has been scheduled for Thursday, March 14th, 2024 from 1900-2000 hrs (7:00 pm - 8:00 pm) via Zoom. Joining instructions have been emailed to members 14 February. An email reminder with an attached agenda will be disseminated in the week preceding the meeting. In accordance with the RUSI(NS) Articles of Association, Article 11 Amendments, please note and find attached to the joining email proposed amendments to be considered at the RUSI(NS) Annual General Meeting 2024.

Hope to see you on the 14th of March.

Stay Safe
Blair Bannerman
Secretary RUSI(NS)

Membership Renewal Reminder

See end of *Dispatches*.

Dispatches

Started with the 12 January edition, *Dispatches* is being published every two weeks rather than weekly. There will also be some content changes.

RUSI(NS) seeks a new editor to replace our editor of several years ago and our editor pro tem since then. Your editor pro tem will be stepping back from the role at our AGM 2024. If you are interested, please email RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com. What *Dispatches* looks like and how often it is published will be up to the new editor.

RUSI(NS) Needs Volunteers!

As of the upcoming AGM, likely March, the following positions need volunteers:

1. editor, *Dispatches*
2. editor, Facebook
3. editor, X

If you are interested, please email RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com.

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.

RUSI(NS) Events:

18 March, Monday – RUSI(NS) Distinguished Speaker RAdm Luciano Carosielli, Commander Cyber Force, the Cyber Force and digital/information management/J6. 1300-1500 Atlantic time. Via Zoom. Details TBA.

17 April, Wednesday – RUSI(NS) Distinguished Speaker MGen Bernard, Canadian Joint Operations Command, "The Canadian Armed Forces and Climate Security Challenges." 1300-1500 Atlantic time. Via Zoom. Details TBA.

Pre-event reading: Draft principles on protection of the environment in armed conflict <https://lieber.westpoint.edu/draft-principles-protection-environment-armed-conflict/>

Other Events:

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/rmcsd/625-romeo-dallaire>

Wargaming Events:

Georgetown University Wargaming Society long-range schedule:

<https://www.guwargaming.org/guwsevents>

27 February, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation “Wargaming Urban Conflict: A PhD in Progress.” 1-3pm AST. Online. To register:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wargaming-urban-conflict-a-phd-in-progress-tickets-791327370467>

29 February, Thursday - Center for Strategic and International Studies Maritime Security Dialogue "DoD’s Warfighting Concept with the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff." 3-4 pm EST. Via webinar. To register: <https://www.csis.org/events/dods-warfighting-concept>.

New: 5 March, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation "Designing Cyber Operations Wargames." 7-9 pm AST. Online. To register:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/designing-cyber-operations-wargames-tickets-835432790967>

New: 19 March, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation “Wargaming at the Peruvian Naval War College.” 7-9 pm ADT. Online. To register:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wargaming-at-the-peruvian-naval-war-college-tickets-831096480947>.

New: 2 April, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation “Wargaming in the Brazilian Navy.” 7-9 pm ADT. Online. To register:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wargaming-in-the-brazilian-navy-tickets-829534378657>.

23 April, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation "Perspective and its Consequences in Historical Game Design." 7-9pm ADT. Online. To register:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/perspective-and-its-consequences-in-historical-game-design-tickets-781758088487>

New: 21 May, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation “Simplifying Large Scale Conflicts.” 7-9 pm ADT. Online. To register:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/simplifying-large-scale-conflicts-tickets-779522571997>.

9 July, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation “Kriegsspiel - past and present.” 1-3pm ADT. Online. To register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/kriegsspiel-past-and-present-tickets-781141072977>

20 August, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation " Wargaming outside of War: How NGO’s use games and gaming to expand maritime governance." 7-9pm ADT. Online. Development and deployment of an IUU fishing wargame. To register:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wargaming-outside-of-war-how-ngos-use-games-and-gaming-to-expand-maritime-tickets-791506887407>

Publications

RUSI(NS) Comments “Canada’s National Disaster Challenge” by Murray Lee, 1 January 2024, https://rusi-ns.ca/national_disaster_challenge/

Royal Alberta United Services Institute Research Brief Volume 4 Issue 1 “UK Arms Diplomacy and International Law on the Black Sea” by LJ Howard, 30 January 2024, <https://rausi.ca/publications/research/631-uk-arms-diplomacy-and-international-law-on-the-black-sea>

RUSI(NS) Comments “Should the Royal Canadian Air Force Acquire the E-7 Wedgetail for Arctic and Northern Surveillance?” by Murray Lee, 27 December 2023, <https://rusi-ns.ca/wedgetail/>

RUSI(NS) Presentation “Why Canada Needs Submarines” by VAdm Topshee, CRCN, 26 Dec 23, https://rusi-ns.ca/canadian_patrol_submarine_project/

RUSI(NS) Comments "The RCAF is on another merry-go-round. This time it’s the Search and Rescue CC295 Kingfisher." by Murray Lee, 20 December 2023, <https://rusi-ns.ca/kingfisher/>

The following publications are received by RUSI(S) from other associations. The latest edition, where not otherwise indicated, may be requested by emailing RUSI(NS). To readers of *Dispatches* from other associations, sharing of your publications is appreciated.

weekly:

Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (Australia) *Defence Update*
Vancouver Artillery Association and Royal United Services Institute Vancouver *Members News*

bi-weekly:

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

monthly:

Canadian Gunner News
Edmonton United Services Institute President’s *Enews*
Military Institute of Windsor *Communiqué*
Naval Reserve Association of Canada Mess Deck *ConneXions*
Royal Alberta United Services Institute *Dispatches*
Royal Canadian Logistics Service *The Logistician*
Royal Canadian Naval Association Admiral Hose Branch *Scuttlebutt*
Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver Island *Newsletter*
Veterans Affairs Canada *Salute!*

quarterly:

Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (Australia) *Quarterly Newsletter*

@RUSI_NS on X

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

STRATCOMCOE @STRATCOMCOE 9 Feb posted and RUSI(NS) reposted: As #AI capabilities mature, its role in narrative tracking and sentiment analysis offers valuable insights into evolving landscape of information warfare, guiding #StratCom initiatives and allowing better planning of wargaming. Read more: <https://stratcomcoe.org/publications/ai-in-support-of-stratcom-capabilities/296>



"CAN🇨🇦 to acquire Swedish-made anti-aircraft system to protect troops in Latvia"
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/russian-nato-canada-latvia-1.7115841> Good start, now need layered air defence capability for @CanadianArmy <https://rusi-ns.ca/air-defence/> H/T @Murray_Brewster



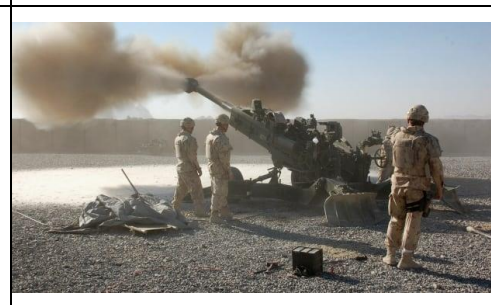
Canadian Armed Forces @CanadianForces 16 Feb posted and RUSI(NS) reposted: The second CC-330 Husky, part of the Strategic Tanker Transport Capability project to replace the @rcf_arc's current fleet of CC-150 Polaris aircraft, arrived in Ottawa today. Learn more about this project: <https://canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/procurement/strategic-tanker-transport-capability-project.html> #WellEquipped



.@NationalDefence "announces Canadian donation of over 800 #drones to Ukraine"
<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2024/02/defence-minister-bill-blair-announces-canadian-donation-of-over-800-drones-to-ukraine.html>
Teledyne FLIR @flir SkyRanger R70 multi-mission unmanned aerial systems #UAS
<https://www.flir.ca/products/skyranger-r70/>
(Defence Minister Bill Blair announces Canadian donation of over 800 drones to Ukraine)



Murray Brewster @Murray_Brewster 20 Feb posted: As allies build factories, pull machine tools out of storage and scramble to arm Ukraine, Canada has yet to sign a major deal to increase munitions production. #cdnpoli #cdnpolitics #RussiaUkraineWar
(As allies scramble to supply Ukraine, Canada still has no deal to ramp up munitions production
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/ukraine-munitions-canada-artillery-1.7118004>)



RUSI(NS) quoted: Does CAN🇨🇦 have plans (strategies?) for development&maintenance of industry (especially workers) to support @CanaadianForces in times of confrontation&conflict? How much are industry/union leaders included in military planning, wargaming, exercises, activities? #IndustrialWarfare

Mike Bechthold UA 🌐 @mike_bechthold 21 Feb posted and RUSI(NS) reposted: Pleased to share my article published today in the Journal of Military and Strategic Studies: The Royal Canadian Air Force and the 2021 Kabul Air Evacuation: Lessons from an ad hoc mission

<https://jmss.org/article/view/78973>

This issue of the JMSS is the result of a workshop held @UCalgary last fall on the Past, Present, and Future of Canadian Military Air Power, hosted by DRDC Centre for Operational Research and Analysis and @CMSSCalgary.

<https://jmss.org/issue/view/5433>



"Conclusions

It is clear from this study that the Canadian Armed Forces and Royal Canadian Air Force are modern, agile, and highly competent organizations. The ability to successfully undertake an operation such as the Kabul airlift on short notice speaks very highly about the capability of the service members. They are well-trained, highly motivated, and willing to make personal sacrifices to get the job done."

"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).

Uncrewed Systems and the Transformation of U.S. Warfighting Capacity

<https://warontherocks.com/2024/02/uncrewed-systems-and-the-transformation-of-u-s-warfighting-capacity/>

"Only in the optimal (rapid, innovative) blending of new-era technologies with new ideas, new organizations, and empowered leadership can Western militaries integrate drones into their approach to maintaining a strategic edge over potential adversaries in a dangerous and uncertain period."

A trinity of uncrewed systems, the meshing of civil and military sensor networks, and the connection to new-era digital command and control systems, are changing warfare.

The authors of the article are well experienced to write this assessment. MGen Ryan (Australian Army, ret'd) is the author of 'White Sun War' (<https://www.amazon.ca/White-Sun-War-Campaign-Taiwan/dp/1636242502>) in which uncrewed systems feature prominently. Good read.



Same Old Same with the British Army?

<https://www.jameswesmith.space/p/same-old-same-with-the-british-army>

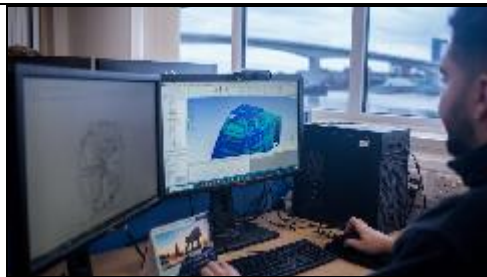


Paraphrased: "Without useful maritime messaging and a functioning naval public relations system in" [insert your government headquarters location here]... "senior land-centric minded leadership (military and civilian)" may develop/follow/continue national policies which fail to include an appreciation of the necessary balance of land and maritime strategies for states whose geo-political situation and dependence on trade by sea means they are maritime states. The balance is not one or the other but has to be carefully considered.

Canada, you may be continent-spanning, but in the matters of international and economic relations you are a maritime state.

Griffon Hoverwork awarded design and feasibility work by Canadian Coast Guard

<https://shipmanagementinternational.com/griffon-hoverwork-awarded-design-and-feasibility-work-by-canadian-coast-guard/>



"Due to their aluminium build and icebreaking core duty in harsh environments, the ACVs (Canadian Coast Guard four air cushion vehicles) have a relatively short in-service life expectancy and are ready to be replaced."

Can replacement ACV (hovercraft) be built in Canada? Do they fit under the National Shipbuilding Strategy? Presuming building ACV is a niche sector, what is the government target for the industry?

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From a Master Mariner: I don't think there are any builders of large hovercraft in Canada. The British have the corner on that market. A hovercraft is more aircraft than boat. The skirt is the most fragile part and they work best over smooth and soft surfaces. Jagged rocks and tree stumps are not good friends to ACV.

From a colleague (#1): We never ran the hovercraft over jagged rocks or tree stumps, just on water, over thin ice, or tidal flats. Even so, the skirt would wear out, especially from the sand, but it wasn't a difficult job to replace as it was engineered for periodic replacement. The main enemy of hovercraft were deadheads which could be wedged up underneath the craft. One actually pierced the deck of SIYAY and almost went through one of the aft fans. As a point of interest, the propellers are made of wood. As for the designation of the vessel, until the larger hovercraft were used, to operate the SRN series, you needed an aircraft pilot's license.

From a colleague (#2): The earliest hovercraft were indeed based on aerospace technology ... in the 1960s-1970s. That changed with the work of Bell Aerospace Canada in the 1970s, when they developed the ACT-100 platform and the Voyageur and Viking prototypes that were based on marine technologies ... particularly marine diesel power for lift and propulsion (and welded aluminum structure) rather than previous helicopter-based turbines and riveted aircraft-

style structure. All subsequent CCG hovercraft new-builds (AP1-88/200 and AP1-88/400) have followed that marine-technologies path, as well as the highly successful series of British-made AP1-88/100 passenger craft and their subsequent BHT-130 and BHT-150 prototypes (the BHT-130/150 were derived from the CCG's AP1-88/400 craft but they failed to gain much traction commercially). <https://www.griffonhoverwork.com/products/hovercraft/bht-hovercraft/>

From #1: The two older CCG hovercraft were built by Hike Metals & Shipbuilding Limited, Wheatley, ON. *Siyay* & *Sipu Muin* both entered service in 1998. There's no reason a Canadian ship builder couldn't be contracted to build more.

From #2: Of course a hovercraft "could" be built in Canada ... as stated earlier, two of the current craft (and two previous CCG hovercraft) WERE built in Canada. In fact, the precursors to the current AP1-88/400 heavy-duty hovercraft (as well as the super-heavy duty US military LCAC hovercraft) were developed in Goderich, Ontario, in the 1970s by Bell Aerospace Canada, who developed the marine-technology *Voyageur* and *Viking* craft that superseded the aerospace-based SR.N6 (<http://www.hovercraftcanada.ca/builders/bell/voyageur.htm>).

Two issues complicating the issue today are the proprietary technical data and construction expertise. Any competent shipyard experienced in aluminum shipbuilding could construct the hovercraft's structure, but dealing with challenges in detailed design and systems integration requires hands-on experience. Currently that expertise and design data are held by Griffon Hoverwork (UK), who in 2012-2013 had purchased the Hoverwork company ... previously part of the Westland Aerospace group that had taken over the original British Hovercraft Corporation. Griffon Hoverwork completed the construction of CCGS *Moytel* in Southampton, UK, which had been started by Hoverwork on the Isle of Wight. CCGS *Mamilossa* was built by Hoverwork in the UK, as was CCGS *Penac* and the earlier AP1-88/200 craft CCGS *Waban-Aki* in 1987. CCGS *Siyay* and CCGS *Sipu Muin* were both built in Canada under licence to the British firm GKN Westland, with technical expertise support provided by the Brits.

A Canadian builder COULD again obtain a licence to access that technical data ... should Griffon Hoverwork choose to release it. At present I gather they seem disinclined to do so, just as Hoverwork declined to release that data for the ground-up conversion of the *Penac* from an AP1-88/100 passenger hovercraft in about 2000.

I'm told that the National Shipbuilding Strategy - though intended as an economic stimulus initiative for Canadian shipbuilders - does not specifically exclude an offshore build (at least in the unique case of hovercraft). In 2000 a challenge was brought to the Canadian International Trade Tribunal (CITT) by a Canadian firm regarding the decision to procure and rebuild the eventual CCGS *Penac* overseas ... that challenge was dismissed by the CITT.

A final point related to the technical data issue, is whether Canada chooses to replicate the existing craft, or pursues an all-new design. Although the design of the newer incumbent CCG craft (*Moytel* and *Mamilossa*) is largely unchanged since the 1998 deliveries (and not that different from the 1987 prototype), it is still today a viable configuration if fitted with updated propulsion and electronics and other systems. However, I suspect that Griffon Hoverwork will seize this opportunity to leverage the CCG builds into an all-new design using new updated construction technologies which they will subsequently offer commercially to their worldwide clients. Hoverwork was investigating newer technologies such as (heatless) friction-stir

welding of aluminum two decades ago, and there is the potential for multiple such innovations to be incorporated into a next-gen hovercraft design.

From #2 (in reply to #1 comments, two above, about building Siyay and Sipu Muin): Only if they can obtain the technical data under licence ... and even then they'd lack the expertise to trouble-shoot design and construction issues.

From #1: Then how did Hike Metals build hovercraft in the 90s? If Canada had a will, we could build our own. Now whether it would make sense is another question. Seems Irving is able to build one-off AOPS, so there's a recent precedent to build Canadian ships.

From #2: Hike had a licence to build from GKN Westland (who then held the rights) as well as technical assistance from Hoverwork. Hoverwork declined to licence the technical data circa 2000 prior to our rebuilding the passenger craft Liv Viking into the CCGS Penac. I don't imagine that Griffon Hoverwork would see any upside to an arrangement such as Hike enjoyed. They DO stand to benefit greatly by leveraging any design development related to a next-Gen CCG new-build. Irving will have already built a half-dozen AOPS for the RCN prior to knocking out a couple more "option" variants for the CCG. Besides which, the bigger yards already have a full schedule for the next couple of decades, so it would have to be a small yard competing for any domestic hovercraft build (a yard that specializes in aluminum construction) and even then they'd have a steep learning curve to incorporate the latest technologies such as heat-free aluminum welding.

From #1: I'm not saying it would make a lot of sense for Canada to get into the hovercraft business again but if there was a will to do it, it's been done before. As it's a very niche market, it probably would make sense to just let Westland make a few more replacements for the CCG. As a point, I was there when we took delivery of Liv Viking. There wasn't much to rebuild, more rearrange for SAR activities as it had been a passenger vehicle. As for Irving, we're going straight into the boom/bust cycle of Canadian ship building if they can't retool for more ships. Why wouldn't they want to expand their capacity/capabilities? Canada used to build things, time to get back to that mentality.

Poland to purchase balloon based radar system

<https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/poland-to-purchase-balloon-based-radar-system/>

"The Tethered Aerostat Radar System (TARS) is an American low-level airborne ground surveillance system that uses aerostats (moored balloons) as radar platforms."



Also: Spike In Chinese Balloons Over Taiwan A "Serious Threat"

<https://www.twz.com/sudden-spike-in-chinese-balloons-over-taiwan-a-serious-threat>

"High-altitude balloons, launched by China, are once again in the headlines, this time with a spate of sightings over and around Taiwan."

There were jokes and a lot of serious comments about 'balloon wars' when Chinese balloons intruded over North America. Recent reporting shows that balloon operations remains a current capability and concern amongst states. Apparently the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) operated an aerostat in Afghanistan but did not continue with the capability

afterwards. One wonders what if any efforts there are now amongst RCAF planners and defence research staff looking into balloon operations.

Drifting Away? Russia's Dissatisfaction with the Law of the Sea

<https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/drifting-away-russias-dissatisfaction-law-sea>



It is highly unlikely the Russian Federation (RF) would ever pull out of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It is not the first time that someone in the Duma raised this issue. Years ago, there was an idea that the five Central Arctic Ocean (CAO) states should just get together and divvy up the CAO, which went nowhere.

- The RF navy benefits from the international navigation rights protected by UNCLOS and the respect for the sovereign immunity of government ships. The US Navy and US Department of State have long advocated for US membership of UNCLOS for good reasons: it is better to be in than to be out. Hence their efforts continue. Surely, the RF navy and Russian foreign minister Lavrov team must be cognizant of this.

- Even if the RF were to pull out of UNCLOS, they would still be governed by customary international law, much of which is codified in UNCLOS anyway. So why would they when they can always claim to be more committed to a rules-based order for the marine environment than the US?

- The RF benefits from the process of having its extended continental shelf claim legitimized by the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) process under UNCLOS. That process has enabled them enter into understandings with Canada, the US, Denmark, and Norway, that their submissions are without prejudice to future maritime boundary delimitation, so that the CLCS can continue deliberations.

- The RF's loss of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Council seat does not mean it will lose power/influence in the IMO. There are many ways how the RF can influence the work of the IMO, within the IMO. Moreover, in a worst case scenario, and because the IMO is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN), the RF will still be able to exert external pressure on the IMO.

- The RF claim over the Sea of Azov is not the only such claim the RF has (note the RF claims historic title claims over straits in Arctic waters). The RF is not alone in making claims that are not recognized by neighbouring and other states. And yet, those many states that have claims not recognized by other states are not rushing to leave UNCLOS.

- More of an issue for the RF is its dissatisfaction with the UNCLOS dispute settlement process. But even with its dissatisfaction with the Arctic Sunrise case, it did not deem it sufficient to leave UNCLOS.

- The notion of the RF being ostracized by the international community may be shaded by North American/Western European bias. The reality is that much of the rest of the world, not to mention BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, plus other states), for better or for worse prefers to maintain a relationship with the RF. Realpolitik.

Controversial British Hunter-class warship program survives as government prepares to unveil Australia's 'Future Navy'

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-02-12/controversial-british-hunter-class-warship-program-survives/103454004>



If, and it is an if, I have from those that are into the weeds with regards to Canadian Surface Combatant project - if Canada is serious about shipbuilding and about a navy then I would suggest we have a lot to learn from Australia.

Importantly, the decision to move up to 96 missiles vice 32 in the Hunter-class is where we need to be - again if Canada is serious. However, the most distressing talk that I have been involved in is that our Type 26 is already at the stage of being at maximum deadweight load for the projected systems, one of which is the vertical launch system with only 32 missiles. That is just the tip of the iceberg. There are other more telling signs that the project is going to have some extremely tough hurdles and I suspect that the 15 year timeline is likely five years off if not more!

At any rate - a decent article. Importantly the defence policy is bipartisan and will survive the current government - as was the intent when drafted. That's what happens when you see the rising dragon from the beach!

Aussie counter-UAS systems compete for Canadian dollars

<https://www.innovationaus.com/aussie-counter-uas-systems-compete-for-canadian-dollars/>



"Canada's efforts in CUAS (counter uncrewed aerial systems) is being led by the Canadian Joint Operations Command with the event supported by the Canadian Armed Forces alongside the US government's Irregular Warfare Technical Support Directorate and Royal Canadian Mounted Police end-users."

RCMP is involved. Good to see civil and military sectors collaborating on what so evidently will benefit from civil-military collaboration. Drone use is ubiquitous, or pretty much getting there. CUAS needs to be a multi-organization effort.

I'm dismayed by the shortfalls of our Navy

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/02/13/dismayed-by-shortfalls-of-our-navy/>

"The concern (about the state of the Royal Navy) is hardly surprising as the Royal Navy is fundamental to the security and wealth of our nation, and despite our countrymen's tendency to 'Sea Blindness' and focus on other issues, when push comes to shove there is a little of 'Jack tar' in every Briton and they expect the RN to do what it has done for centuries."



The piece by Admiral Lord West, former First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff, Royal Navy, should be considered by Canadian authorities. There are parallels in his assessment with the situation in which the Royal Canadian Navy finds itself. Telling, too, is the admiral's comment about 'sea blindness,' a long-time concern of Canadians who appreciate the importance of the sea to Canada's security and prosperity, though maybe Canadians do not have it in their blood as much as they should. The current situations in the Red Sea and the Panama Canal need to be watched closely by Canadian government leaders and by business people.

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From an Australian colleague: My army colleagues will disagree vehemently, but it seems possible to generate a reasonably effective fighting force for land warfare within a relatively short period of time, as the Ukrainians have done. However, one cannot conjure up a navy in no time flat. Even if the scales fell off political eyes today, it might be possible to generate the kind of naval force we all require in around ten years – provided we can find somebody to build and equip the ships. Finding the people is also going to call for a national effort, led from the top.

Australia gets our report on the future of the Royal Australian Navy next week, I believe. Whatever it contains, I expect it will be pigeon-holed as too difficult to implement. After all, the federal government is intent on delivering tax cuts to the masses.

In recent news, the Germans are building a new ammunition factory to supply Ukraine with artillery shells. Now that would have seemed like a glimpse of the bleeding obvious about three years ago. It's not just 'sea blindness' we have to deal with!

Is the US ready for World War 3? Concerns over US Navy as fears grow

<https://metro.co.uk/2024/02/14/us-world-war-3-ready-navy-20275816/>

"The situation is so dire that the US government may be forced to invoke the Defense Production Act to convert some civilian industries for military uses,..."



How much have the Canadian government and Canadian industries looked at and planned for a conversion to support production in times of conflict? What legislation is in place?

Other Sources

#3D printing

3D Printing is Saving the U.S. Coast Guard Serious Money

<https://maritime-executive.com/editorials/3d-printing-is-saving-the-u-s-coast-guard-serious-money>

#A2R

The Morality of Military Recruitment

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/morality-military-recruitment-kirsty-skinner-l6kqe/>

#air power

Air Force To Totally Revamp Its Structure To Compete With China

<https://www.twz.com/news-features/air-force-to-totally-revamp-its-structure-to-compete-with-china>

Article says something about worked-up command teams and about the challenges of composite formations (logistics and engineering).

#Arctic

Cooperation, Stability, and Security in the Arctic? - Strategies for Moving Forward

<https://www.masseycollege.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Arctic-Conference-Report.pdf>

True north strong?

<https://legionmagazine.com/true-north-strong/>

#Canadian Armed Forces

Canada Undefended: Our military readiness is dangerously insufficient. Here's how to fix it

<https://nationalpost.com/opinion/canada-undefended-our-military-readiness-is-dangerously-insufficient-heres-how-to-fix-it>

#China

How Primed for War Is China?

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/02/04/china-war-military-taiwan-us-asia-xi-escalation-crisis/>

#Arctic

China's 'Three Warfares' Strategy in Action: Implications for the Sino-India Boundary, the Arctic, and Antarctica

<https://www.orfonline.org/research/china-s-three-warfares-strategy-in-action-implications-for-the-sino-india-boundary-the-arctic-and-antarctica>

#information operations

TikTok: An Expanding Front in Cognitive Warfare

<https://jamestown.org/program/tiktok-an-expanding-front-in-cognitive-warfare/>

#culture

Risky Business

<https://wavellroom.com/2024/02/09/risky-business/>

Yes, the article is UK, but its lamentations could well apply to Canada. The tension between the elements/priorities that make up a fighting force.

#cyber operations

#artificial intelligence

Microsoft says US rivals are beginning to use generative AI in offensive cyber operations

<https://apnews.com/article/microsoft-generative-ai-offensive-cyber-operations-3482b8467c81830012a9283fd6b5f529>

#maritime security

Fighting Cyberattacks at the Western Hemisphere's Busiest Port

<https://www.domesticpreparedness.com/articles/fighting-cyberattacks-at-the-western-hemispheres-busiest-port>

Ports will be one of the first targets during a major inter-state conflict.

#defence policy

Canada must realize that a strong economy comes from a strong military

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/commentary/article-canada-must-realize-that-a-strong-economy-comes-from-a-strong-military/>

#drones

Drone Warfare's Terrifying AI-Enabled Next Step Is Imminent

<https://www.twz.com/news-features/drone-warfares-terrifying-ai-enabled-next-step-is-imminent>

'Drone' Warfare Is Not Just in the Skies

<https://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/articles/2024/2/13/editors-notes-drone-warfare-is-not-just-in-the-skies>

The author didn't get the origin of the term 'drone' correctly; see: "The Surprising History of Unmanned Navy Systems"

(<https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2020/october/comment-discussion>).

#Indo-Pacific

Civil Society Defense Initiatives

<https://jamestown.org/program/civil-society-defense-initiatives/>

Taiwan's Theory of the Fight

<https://warontherocks.com/2024/02/taiwans-theory-of-the-fight/>

#industrial warfare

The Return of Industrial Warfare

<https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/return-industrial-warfare>

The Pentagon wants industry to transform again to meet demand. Can it?

<https://www.defensenews.com/industry/2024/02/20/the-pentagon-wants-industry-to-transform-again-to-meet-demand-can-it/>

#intelligence

Repeated Intelligence Failures – Not Connecting the Dots

<https://www.domesticpreparedness.com/articles/repeated-intelligence-failures-not-connecting-the-dots>

#legal

Military Objectives by Location

<https://lieber.westpoint.edu/military-objectives-location/>

#legal

Might China Withdraw From the UN Law Of The Sea Treaty?

<https://thediplomat.com/2019/05/might-china-withdraw-from-the-un-law-of-the-sea-treaty/>

Note the author, might have had something to do with the position taken.

#maritime security

Drifting Away? Russia's Dissatisfaction with the Law of the Sea

<https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/drifting-away-russias-dissatisfaction-law-sea>

#maritime security

Flags of Deceit could take shipping back to the bad old days

<https://www.lloydlist.com/LL1148156/Flags-of-Deceit-could-take-shipping-back-to-the-bad-old-days>

#legal

Houthi attacks on Red Sea shipping: Charterparty implications

<https://www.skuld.com/topics/legal/pi-and-defence/houthi-attacks-on-red-sea-shipping-charterparty-implications/>

The situation is just as much a commercial law matter as any other (kinetic, international relations, maritime security, etc.). Insurance rules!

#NATO

Digitalisation of Defence in NATO and the EU: Making European Defence Fit for the Digital Age

<https://www.iiss.org/research-paper/2023/08/digitalisation-of-defence--in-nato-and-the-eu/>

#Arctic

A Temperature Check on NATO's 'Arctic Sparta'

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/02/09/ivalo-nato-finland-border-russia>

#reading

Warfare's Theory and Practice

<https://mwi.westpoint.edu/war-books-warfares-theory-and-practice/>

#Russia-Ukraine War

A short history of Russia and Ukraine

<https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2024/01/29/a-short-history-of-russia-and-ukraine>

The Kremlin's Occupation Playbook: Coerced Russification and Ethnic Cleansing in Occupied Ukraine

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/kremlins-occupation-playbook-coerced-russification-and-ethnic-cleansing-occupied>

Yes, Russia Really Is Sending 65-Year-Old Tanks to Assault Ukrainian Positions

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidaxe/2024/02/09/yes-russia-really-is-sending-65-year-old-tanks-to-assault-ukrainian-positions/?sh=1883b1e73a04>

Ukrainian Railway Sabotage Increasingly Unsettles Kremlin

<https://jamestown.org/program/ukrainian-railway-sabotage-increasingly-unsettles-kremlin/>

It's the logistics!

Moscow's Aerospace Forces: No air of superiority

<https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/military-balance/2024/02/moscows-aerospace-forces-no-air-of-superiority/>

Equipment losses in Russia's war on Ukraine mount

<https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/military-balance/2024/02/equipment-losses-in-russias-war-on-ukraine-mount/>

By detecting Russian 'carrots' and 'tea bags,' Ukraine decodes enemy chatter to save lives

<https://apnews.com/article/ukraine-russia-war-surveillance-radio-intercepts-drones-435f0436ebcd24efee2fbfb8cee920f7>

Russia refits old tanks after losing 3,000 in Ukraine - research centre

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-relying-old-stocks-after-losing-3000-tanks-ukraine-leading-military-2024-02-13/>

Does Canada have any old tanks in reserve to refit?...

Russian Military Objectives and Capacity in Ukraine Through 2024

<https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/russian-military-objectives-and-capacity-ukraine-through-2024>

Ukraine's Long-Term Path to Success: Jumpstarting a Self-Sufficient Defense Industrial Base with US and EU Support

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/ukraine%E2%80%99s-long-term-path-success-jumpstarting-self-sufficient-defense-industrial-base>

A Frozen War in Ukraine Would Be a Victory for Russia

<https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/ukraine-war-russia-zelensky-commander>

Good line: "In a war of attrition, strategic adaptation trumps tactical adaptation."

Putin's 'Active Measures' and Hidden Discussion Between the Kremlin and Military

<https://jamestown.org/program/putins-active-measures-and-hidden-discussion-between-the-kremlin-and-military/>

An Operational View on the USV Attacks in the Black Sea from an Admiral's Eyes

<https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2024/02/analysis-an-operational-view-on-the-usv-attacks-in-the-black-sea-from-an-admirals-eyes/>

Making Attrition Work: A Viable Theory of Victory for Ukraine

<https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/survival-online/2024/01/making-attrition-work-a-viable-theory-of-victory-for-ukraine/>

#drones

Navy of Drones

<https://wavellroom.com/2024/02/12/navy-of-drones/>

British Target Drones Appear To Have Been Turned Into Strike Weapons In Ukraine

<https://www.twz.com/news-features/british-target-drones-appear-to-have-been-turned-into-strike-weapons-in-ukraine>

#economic warfare #maritime security

Russia's Shadow Tanker Fleet Runs into Trouble

<https://maritime-executive.com/editorials/russia-s-shadow-tanker-fleet-runs-into-trouble>

#information operations

Kremlin Creates Illusion of Imaginary Victories While Unable to Solve Real Problems (Part One)

<https://jamestown.org/program/kremlin-creates-illusion-of-imaginary-victories-while-unable-to-solve-real-problems-part-one/>

#naval warfare

Ukraine war shows Royal Navy how to strike unprepared enemy with maritime tech, expert says

<https://www.forces.net/ukraine/ukraine-war-shows-royal-navy-how-strike-unprepared-enemy-maritime-technology-expert-says>

#Drone Detection

Ukraine Using Thousands Of Networked Microphones To Track Russian Drones

<https://www.twz.com/land/thousands-of-networked-microphones-are-tracking-drones-in-ukraine>

D---, we shudda kept some of that old artillery locating equipment from the Great War in reserve.



#sea power

'Seabindness' and the Royal Navy Today

<https://www.jameswesmith.space/p/seabindness-and-the-royal-navy-today>

"Nor is it just a question of public relations for the task of educating about the questions high-level decision-makers are asking is not one of the day-to-day operations of a warship but why national strategy has these assets in the first place."

#shipbuilding

Seaspan Shipyards completes 'Prototype Block' for Canadian Coast Guard's future Polar Icebreaker

<https://www.seaspan.com/press-release/seaspan-shipyards-completes-prototype-block-for-canadian-coast-guards-future-polar-icebreaker/>

#strategy

Strategic History

<https://www.militarystrategymagazine.com/article/strategic-history/>

#technology

DRDC investigates augmented reality for improved mission planning

<https://science.gc.ca/site/science/en/blogs/defence-and-security-science/drdc-investigates-augmented-reality-improved-mission-planning>

#United States

This Is How The Air Force's New Wing Structure Will Actually Work

<https://www.twz.com/news-features/this-is-how-the-air-forces-new-wing-structure-will-actually-work>

#war

"Planning for Protraction A Historically Informed Approach to Great-power War and Sino-US Competition" [available on request to RUSI(NS)] is worth reading, if only chapter one (freely accessible at: <https://www.iiss.org/publications/adelphi/2023/planning-for-protraction-a-historically-informed-approach-to-great-power-war-and-sino-us-competition/>). The point is that the idea of a quick three-day war between two major players is unlikely. The lessons being gleaned from Ukraine point to this very fact as do most historical examples.

The Timeless Relevance of Classical War Theories in Modern Warfare

<https://fromthegreennotebook.com/2024/02/21/the-timeless-relevance-of-classical-war-theories-in-modern-warfare/>

#warfare

Lessons from Ukraine and Israel on how America should approach new tech

<https://breakingdefense.com/2024/02/lessons-from-ukraine-and-israel-on-how-america-should-approach-new-tech>

Other

Canadian Defence Academy *The Torch*: What's New This Week? 20-26 February

<https://cfc-ca.libguides.com/c.php?g=709488&p=5224119>

Royal Canadian Navy *Our Navy Today* Volume 7 Issue 1

<https://www.canada.ca/en/navy/corporate/navy-news/our-navy-today/volume-7-issue-1.html>

Federal Open Science Repository of Canada

<https://open-science.canada.ca/home>

"The Federal Open Science Repository of Canada provides public, web-based access to federally authored scientific articles and publications from participating science-based departments and agencies."

Doesn't seem to include defence science.

Underappreciated but now essential engineering capability

Tony Brown @agbdrilling 11 Feb posted: Royal Engineers Light Mobile Digger based on a Thornycroft truck chassis. For Digging trenches and field defences used mainly in the 1960s-80s

How many like this does Canada have?



Think Defence @thinkdefence 12 Feb posted: A hydraulic rotary drum cutter used to excavate shallow holes for anti-tank mines. This is a great example of simple and low cost equipment that can have an outsize impact. It is OK to sweat the little things



Engineering capabilities and drones

Think Defence @thinkdefence 12 Feb posted: Teleoperated wheeled loader/excavator, used mostly for EOD activities

The CAF has small EOD robotic vehicles. This appears to be a converted civil vehicle ('franken'eng?').



Milrem THeMIS UGV with Ukrainian Forces
<https://www.joint-forces.com/defence-equipment-news/70222-milrem-themis-ugv-with-ukrainian-forces>

For "...demining, route clearance, re-supply and other missions.."



Land Engineering Support Centre

LGen J.J.M.J. Paul, CCA / CAC @Army_Comd_Armeec 20 Feb posted: The Land Engineering Support Centre is doing important work towards vehicle modifications and many other innovative solutions that support Army operations and equipment. It was great to be there in person to gain more insight into their projects.

Looking at the posts above in Dispatches, it would be interesting to learn what the Land Engineering Support Centre is working on.



The utility of old equipment

Ukraine Territorial Defense Forces @TDF_UA 11 Feb posted: At the beginning of 2022, more than 30,000 Maxim machine guns were retrieved from storage – and the vintage water-cooled weapon proved to be highly efficient on the cutting edge of air defense against the "Shakhed" drones due to its ability to fire for several minutes in a row.

Many commentators in the X thread noted the 30,000 number.

What is Canada's policy for storage of old equipment? Useful for mobilization or secondary purposes?



Enhanced Lethality Surface Combatant Fleet

The following was shared widely with Canadian government and industry, what with the potential for cause for consideration of our situation.



The Australian government news release "Enhanced Lethality Surface Combatant Fleet":

<https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/media-releases/2024-02-20/navys-enhanced-lethality-surface-combatant-fleet>

The NR called it a 'blueprint.' A form of defence policy update?

Good to read some strategic rationale: "Our strategic circumstances require a larger and more lethal surface combatant fleet, complemented by a conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine fleet. Navy's future fleet will be integral to ensure the safety and security of our sea lines of communication and maritime trade, through operations in our immediate region."

The Australian government wisely simultaneously made a news release addressing industrial support:

Australia's defence industrial base expanded to deliver Navy's enhanced lethality surface combatant fleet

<https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/media-releases/2024-02-20/australias-defence-industrial-base-expanded-deliver-navys-enhanced-lethality-surface-combatant-fleet>

Representative media reporting, what caught their attention (the quasi-drones):

Heavily armed 'optionally crewed' ships to enter service under massive reshaping of Australia's naval fleet

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-02-20/heavily-armed-optionally-crewed-ships-under-naval-fleet-reshape/103487878>

Full report at: Independent Analysis into Navy's Surface Combatant Fleet

<https://www.defence.gov.au/about/reviews-inquiries/independent-analysis-navy-surface-combatant-fleet>

The RAN Chief of Navy's words about the plan:

Navy chief Mark Hammond: With a well-designed campaign, surface warships can operate in a high intensity conflict

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/navy-chief-mark-hammond-with-a-well-designed-campaign-surface-warships-can-operate-in-a-high-intensity-conflict/>

Innovation and the Wicked Mismatch

Editor: “The Wavell Room (<https://wavellroom.com/>) is a British military blogging site which aims to generate discussion about current British military issues.” The below accompanied their 20 February 2024 newsletter, and as it is not otherwise online, is posted here in its entirety.



Harmful innovations can leave us badly mired. Canada is a cautionary tale.

Although it is frequently spoken of in breathlessly positive tones, the word ‘innovation’ is not a synonym for military effectiveness. Military innovation is risk. It involves a gamble: creating a new capability is a leap of faith until it has been rigorously tested and explored, both for the effectiveness of the new capability and for the mothballing of the existing or traditional capabilities it is replacing. Innovation always comes with trade-offs and sometimes works out unfavourably.

Dr Kendrick Kuo (<https://kendrickkuo.com/>) of the US Naval War College has done ground breaking work in the field of dangerous innovation. Recently he has published a trifecta of academic articles critiquing the literature on military innovation. Kuo theorizes that harmful innovation is most likely to occur when, faced with the “wicked mismatch” of growing commitments and shrinking resources, militaries make desperate gambles on new capabilities to meet operational goals. They seek a silver bullet and endorse scrapping old capabilities before new ones are justified. Kuo uses historical examples including armoured warfare and aircraft carriers in the interwar years to make his case.

There is, however, a recent example of the mismatch related to digital technology: the experience of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) during the 1990s.

In 1994 Canada cashed its cheque for the post-Cold War “peace dividend,” and slashed its Regular Forces by 32%, from 90,000 to 60,000. At the same time, it ordered missions to Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina expanded in scope, commitment, and tempo. The forces reduction program, reduced personnel assigned to headquarters and support functions by 50%, minimizing harm to the operational elements needed for constant rotations. Because the CAF was beginning a digital transformation with widespread computerization, the first to go were information handlers: clerks, secretaries, archivists, librarians. The CAF viewed the information handler positions as redundant, over-staffed, expendable in comparison to operators, and likely to be cut eventually in the new digital era anyway. It was a rational organizational choice, but one with devastating long-term consequences.

The people who were cut constituted the record-keeping and information management backbone of the CAF. The CAF’s well-disciplined Cold War analog record-keeping systems disintegrated just as digital technology became widespread in the organization, but the program cut skilled personnel before the tech was in place that might enable a smaller staff. Email and instant messaging bypassed a crumbling centralized record-keeping system rather

than buttressing it. By 2001 observers described the institution as being in a state of “records-keeping bedlam.”

It has never recovered. To this day, the CAF still has no single centralized record-keeping system. The organization’s data and IT are heavily balkanized among subordinate entities and commands. Recent internal studies have described the Canadian military’s information environment as “untrustworthy, inefficient, [frustrating to] users, and [limiting] the value that DND/CAF can glean from its own information.” More than two decades later, the scope for enterprise-wide digitalization and large-scale defence artificial intelligence initiatives are grim. The CAF’s own 2022 *Digital Campaign Plan* described the organization as existing at the lowest stage of digital maturity: “legacy analog systems and processes, stove-piped capability development, and generally low levels of digital literacy. Members of the CAF struggle to access data, analyse the data, and to generate decision-ready information supported by descriptive analytics. Data manipulation is predominantly done manually.” Canada will struggle to keep pace with its allies in coming years, to say nothing of its adversaries.

Canada is a cautionary tale for Kuo’s harmful innovation and wicked mismatch ideas. Optimistic embrace of technology amid a budget crunch and expanding commitments resulted in harmful innovations that have actively impeded the institution for decades.

Image Credit. Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Archives, Calgary, Canada.

Security Affairs Committee Synopsis 16 February

O Canada

The ArriveCan app is the source of a great deal of discussion given the Auditor-General's report to committee this week which shows that the 80k CAD budget blossomed to over 60m CAD. It is expected that this issue will suck the air out of other issues for the near term. This will hamper Parliament from giving thought and discussion to other issues such as the ongoing war in Ukraine, Israel-Gaza and foreign interference. These all require relatively quick action and that is something that is not occurring at this time despite threats from Russia in the Arctic and a US presidential candidate who has been vocal about having Russia attack NATO nations that do not meet the 2% goal. While overreacting would have likely been much worse, not acting is nearly equally as bad. Successive governments have let the roof off the house in the north and have failed to take significant actions to correct these issues in a timely manner. These issues are not going away.

The role of any armed forces is to provide deterrence and if that fails lethal response in serious cases. The government has created conditions that place this in danger and consequently the country. Recruiting is an excellent example of this whereby the usual highest participating group has been ignored and in fact discouraged from joining. While equity for all is desirable; it should not be ignoring the main recruiting base. The First and Second World Wars, Korea, and even Afghanistan were usually fought by young men who happened to be mainly white. While there should be all effort to encourage all citizens to consider a career in the military, it

should not be at the expense of the forces as a whole especially when we are nearly 17k short. The bottom line is that if they are living, breathing, relatively healthy, meet security standards and able to meet the requirement for universality of service, there should be no stopping anyone at present given the severe shortages. Universality of service is apparently controversial but it shouldn't be. A member of the service has to be deployable and able to function within their occupation which includes being able to fight if and when required. On 12 February 2024, the UK Minister of Defence, Grant Shapps, instructed the Ministry of Defence to review its guidelines to ensure that Britain can defend its borders and isn't hindered by "political correctness", according to an article by GBN by Holly Taylor. The minister recognizes that Britain has a recruiting problem in part caused by poor implementation of a policy and by not considering the secondary effects of that implementation. Canada has the same issue, when seemingly good policy gets in the way of the armed forces' main reason for being. We need to rethink how we get to the goal of having a representative armed forces, at the same time recognizing it actually has a mission of great importance.

It is interesting that Ukraine turned down Australia's legacy F-18 aircraft as being too old and out-of-date. It was apparently also stated but later denied that they are "flying trash." Given that legacy Hornets are the same as our current fleet, in fact we purchased 25 Australian F-18, we are using what the desperate Ukrainians are calling "flying trash." Ours have been well maintained and updated regularly, but they are too old for modern combat.

Food for thought. According to various sources there are over 700 Iranian agents in Canada. China has set up illegal police stations and have actually brought alleged criminals back to China from Canada, and of course there are the Indians as well. Given that even a relatively small surveillance operation can use a large number of human resources, are our security services which are principally the RCMP and CSIS organized and resourced to deal with a situation that are almost certainly out of control? Do they have the right legislation to support their operations? One wonders.

United States

The US and UK continue operations in the Red Sea against the Houthis, including pre-emptive strikes and escort duties. Many shipping firms have chosen to go around Africa instead. 'Strangely,' ships allegedly carrying Russian oil are still using the Red Sea route. The UK is studying whether they are able send an aircraft carrier to assist this operation.

The US Senate passed a motion that provides money for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, as well as humanitarian aid. Their first attempt was stopped because it had a bipartisan support for border measures, however, the former president asked the Speaker of the House not to allow for such a measure as border security was going to be a key part of his presidential platform. It is strongly suspected that the speaker may find himself removed because of his loyalty to the former president rather than to the country.

The former President also made comments to the effect that if Russia were to attack a NATO member that was not meeting the 2% goal, then he would encourage President Putin to beat

the living daylight out of that country. Needless to say, this is against one of the key functions of NATO, that if one country is attacked then it would be considered an attack on all. Canada unfortunately, is a candidate for such a beating as we only spent 1.38 % of our GDP on defence. If Mr Trump is re-elected, Canada can expect repercussions in our relations with the US.

Moldova

Moldovan authorities destroyed the explosive part of a Russian drone which crashed in Moldovan territory but failed to explode. The rest of the drone was recovered intact. Both Moldova and Romania have been hit by Russian drones in recent times, although it is clear that they were not the intended targets.

Moldova just established a National Cybersecurity Agency to counter malign cyber threats against the country. This includes creation of the National Institute of Innovations in Cybersecurity, also known as Cybrcor, to create a "secure and resilient digital future" according to an article on Yahoo News on 12 February 2024. It is expected that some expertise was provided by NATO and the EU for this effort. Moldova is moving as fast as possible to be able to resist Russian disinformation and cyber warfare.

Belarus

Belarus authorities continue a nation-wide sweep against opposition activists. This has been ongoing for several months.

The Belarus foreign minister criticized Canada for not handing over the former Waffen SS soldier Yaroslav Hunka to Russia for judicial actions. Canada has often refused to extradite criminals to regimes and countries where "rule of law" and human rights are not respected. Mr Hunka is entitled to a proper trial in a court that is free from authoritarian government. Belarus also has requested Mr Vladimir Katryuk, who allegedly participated in the killing of civilians in the Belarus village of Khatyn. Needless to say there are mixed feelings on this issue.

Israel-Hamas War

Most of Gaza is now firmly under Israeli control. Most of Hamas and Islamic Jihad forces have been killed or captured at this point and organized resistance is now relegated to the area around and including the city of Rafah. The size of these forces is suspected to be around four small battalions. The trouble is that most of Gaza's population is now located in Rafah and the possibility of severe civilian casualties is considered high. Most of the world including President Biden has asked Israel not to attack and to ensure the safe passage of civilians out of the danger zone. Israel is reluctant to comply. From their point of view any survival of Hamas is unthinkable and they insist that Hamas can never have any say in any future Gazan government and that UNWRA be disbanded as they have assisted Hamas in their efforts including anti-Israeli education, active participation in the 7 October attack and support to Hamas military operations. Most recently, part of the tunnel system used by Hamas in their operations, including apparently entry points, was found to be underneath UNWRA

headquarters. The UN is investigating but appointed two out of three investigators known as Hamas sympathizers according to the Israelis. Needless to say, this does not improve Israel's attitude towards the UN. The Israeli Prime Minister has stated that Hamas will be destroyed in detail and that Israeli hostages will be recovered. It does not seem like peace is in the offing.

While I am sympathetic to Palestinians to a degree, it would be good to note that a poll of Gazans indicated that more than 70% were supportive of the 7 October attack. The poll was conducted before the main Israeli attacks. Israel has fought four wars with Hamas, each one more violent and destructive than the last. Israel is now close to eliminating Gaza as a base in the near term at least and has inflicted massive losses on Hamas military forces, killing well over 10k fighters. Now that they are close to eliminating this threat, they are being asked to stop. It would be similar to allied troops being asked to stop outside of Berlin at the end of the Second World War. I can understand Israel's point of view.

Russia-Ukraine War

The war continues at a very bloody pace. In a shake up of the armed forces, Ukraine has just changed the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of Ukraine from General Zaluzhnyi to Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyii. General Zaluzhnyi was well liked and contrary to the Russian disinformation campaign he was not fired but rather was given new duties. This allows new commanders to come forward. Col Gen Syrskyii was just one of many changes as many well trained and experienced younger officers have also been brought forward. These officers are well known and respected by the troops. The exact reasoning for a change at this time is not really known, but Gen Zaluzhnyi's farewell showed the president and the former commander in good spirits and supportive. This is hardly the scene of a firing thus I believe Russia may not have seen the last of Gen Zaluzhnyi, and new local commanders may indicate a renewed effort on the part of Ukraine as well. Ukraine has stated that it will adopt a defensive posture in the near term, causing Russia as many casualties as possible and to deprive Putin of any victory prior to the Russian election on 17 March 2024.

Russia is now on the attack across the entire frontier and is making short but steady gains particularly around the town of Avdiikva. This situation is difficult with Ukrainian forces nearly encircled in two separate places around the Avdiikva front - one is just a small salient and the other would encompass the entire town including all supply roads and ways of escape. Ukraine has just completed a relief in place, withdrawing some units that have been there since the start of the most recent phase of the war. They were replaced by formations that are well trained and experienced which likely would allow Ukrainian forces to adapt as necessary to the situation more rapidly. These formations are also fresh. One expects that Ukraine will try to attrite Russian forces and prevent Putin from having his key victory prior to the Russian election. At the same time these formations have shown élan and are able to take the battle to the enemy effectively.

Speaking of election preparations, President Putin gave an interview to the Lord Ha Ha wanna be, Tucker Carlson. The interview gave everyone in the West a full measure of Putin's rather strange understanding of the world and its history. One could only laugh as the Mongolian President also sent out a map which laid out the Mongolian empire at its peak using Putin's

own logic. It was evident that Putin lives in a bubble of his own creation that bears no relationship to reality. Based on his own fantasy he continues to sacrifice the youth of his country. It is pathetic.

Russia's economy continues to deteriorate although it is now aligned with the requirements of the war. Infrastructure critical for Russia's war effort continues to be destroyed or damaged by Ukrainian actions. This week an oil storage facility in Moscow was heavily damaged and a large factory manufacturing parts for MiG fighter aircraft was also damaged. In both cases, the smoke and flames made obvious to Muscovites that the war is not going as well as expected. Russian military spending is now at 8% of GDP or 30% of the annual national budget. Russia's social service network is also undermined as inflation takes its toll on older citizens. There is a growing anti-war movement that appears to be the work of the wives and mothers of mobilized soldiers, and there are indications that the regime is losing its ability to intimidate everyone. This and other groups within the semi-autonomous regions are now causing issues for the regime. This is not a serious threat yet but it is growing. The war effort is not sustainable and Russia will undergo significant difficulties as the war lingers onwards to an uncertain future for both sides.

Two more quick items: Russian forces have accumulated more than 2100 rail cars and placed them on rails from Volnovakhu North towards the city of Donetsk. This results in a line of rail cars around thirty kms long with only a couple breaks in the line. The main purpose is to create a defensive line across a critical part of the front. The rail cars were collected from inside the occupied areas. The second item is that a Rupucha-class landing ship was hit by multiple Magura 5 unmanned surface vessels. Video from the operation shows the ship being hit multiple times before capsizing and sinking. The vessel was thought to be the *Tsesar Kunikov*. It is the second Russian vessel sunk within the last two weeks by a country with a riverine navy.

NATO is waking up to the Russian threat and most countries close to Russia now estimate that it is not if Russia will attack but when. All but seven countries will have achieved the 2% goal. Canada is not one of them. It is a black eye for a founding member of NATO. Canada has lost its way as a leading country and the present government continues to lose its leadership on the international scene.

China

Early in the month, Xi gave a speech that reflected on the fall of China's key stock markets. He stated essentially that Chinese stock markets are not like the Western ones, but these markets have Chinese characteristics. The result is that the two major stock markets set records for new lows. Xi does not have the experience or knowledge to manage a modern economy. His training is more like old versions of communism, although that didn't work either. Although the intention was to provide support for the markets, his speech did not reassure investors. Markets in Hong Kong and Shanghai both had substantial losses. Xi has been unable to stabilize the situation.

The CCP is not a monolith, it is made up of many smaller factions, usually based on the political leadership groups who are often at each other's throats. Xi's latest efforts on the economy have not gone over well with senior Party leadership; there is now considerable doubt whether he is fully in charge. There is reason to believe he may have lost the full support of his own military. Although China appears to be okay, it is clear not everything is well and issues are likely to come to the surface. The military continues to be purged, and as this continues, will the military obey Xi's orders or will it support its own commander?

China is continuing its efforts for imperial gain around the East and South China Seas and in the Himalayas where China continues to make inroads on two small neighbours, Nepal and Bhutan. Chinese attempts to intimidate Indian shepherds did not work but it made an interesting video of Chinese aggression. As China's economy continues to sputter along, there will be efforts to distract the population which may become violent. China is at a tipping point, without a successful economy the Party will be breaking the covenant with the people to provide a better life while they stay out of politics. Lack of success in the economy will give rise to non-party opposition. These could become large as the economy and businesses fail. The Party needs business success to survive and at the moment they are not succeeding.

Security Affairs Committee Synopsis 23 February

O Canada

Canada this week allocated more funding for military assistance to Ukraine. This latest package involves the provision of 800 SkyRanger R70 multi-purpose drones created by Teledyne of Waterloo, Ontario. The package also includes 44m CAD contribution to the F-16 training program. To date Canada has contribute nearly 7b of which 2.6b is for military aid of all types including artillery, tanks, armoured vehicles, ammunition, small arms and technical equipment. Ukraine has also requested all of Canada's CRV-7 rockets which are no longer in use by the Canadian Armed Forces. There are 83k of these weapons. Negotiations are ongoing.

Canada also purchased the RBS 70 from Saab Canada for 227m CAD along with a 46m CAD purchase of anti-drone equipment, both systems to be acquired this year. It is a step in the right direction, however, still woefully short of actual needs for the entire army. The navy is still without suitable air defence systems for its ships and the air force is still flying an aircraft retired by most countries. New programs are ongoing but are far too late as it is increasingly clear some form of conflict may break out soon and we will have to fight with our meager resources and manpower shortages.

The government doesn't seem to have a clear understanding of the world situation, and it is painfully obvious as NATO rearms. Even this week it became clear that the government has done almost nothing to restart our defence industries, especially in ammunition. Considering the amount of waste created by meaningless and largely ineffective programs, wasting tens of billions of dollars and crippling the economy, surely they can find 400m CAD to have two ammunition suppliers start production of artillery ammunition. It seems they cannot understand that if Ukraine falls, it will likely mean Canadian troops will be manning the

forward lines shortly after. We can prepare now or waste thousands of lives later. The government needs to recruit and equip the services, including all our other services such as Canadian Border Services, Communications Security Establishment, Canadian Security and Intelligence Service and the RCMP to be able to deal with the potential of a major event requiring a robust response to security and intelligence issues, and to prepare the armed forces to provide effective deterrence and if necessary production and effective use of lethal force.

Canada should look to allies for shortcuts to correct the massive shortages throughout the system. We need efficient effective action as soon as possible before it is too late, and it may be too late now.

Australia

Australia is undergoing a strategic review. Many of the contributions this week from down under speak to their understanding of the very real threat posed by authoritarian states. One action is to double the effective size and lethality of their surface fleet. It should also be mentioned that they envisage a mixture of fighting ships; emphasis on ships able to fight and not for constabulary work such as our Arctic and Offshore Patrol Vessels are designed to do. Please give these articles a read, the lessons and comments could apply here as well.

<https://www.eurasiantimes.com/china-arms-pakistan-with-deadly-submarine-keel/>

India will not be amused by this deal.

Keep in mind India is now producing indigenous nuclear submarines as well, including ballistic missile boats.

<https://www.eurasiantimes.com/airbus-a-400m-drills-with-indian-air-force-as/>

All that is needed now is a few used airplane dealers!

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12115501/Australia-Defence-Force-recruitment-levels-not-personnel-leaving.html>

Recruiting falls seriously short down under as well as up over!

<https://www.australiandefence.com.au/news/news/irvingq-develops-naval-decoy-system>

Decoys can make things more difficult in the crowded Red Sea for attackers and other parties in that space.

<https://gcaptain.com/china-to-send-coast-guard-ships-as-tensions-rise-over-taiwanese-islands/>

The tensions continue between Taiwan and China.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-02-18/china-s-new-antarctic-station-qinling-in-antarctica-australia/103464840>

How many research stations does any country need in Antarctica?

<https://www.eurasiantimes.com/at-staggering-45b-australias-most-expensive-but-troubled/>

The Type 26 has survived yet another review in Australia. I think the number will fall to six from nine because of rising costs and delays (*Editor: they have*).

Australian navy's surface fleet to double in size under \$54 billion overhaul

<https://www.9news.com.au/national/australian-navy-surface-fleet-to-double-in-size/68747daf-fc93-4bb7-94c8-bbcc6129fe0b>

The Australian government made the official announcement this week about the naval program. There will be 11 new frigates plus the 4 or 5 nuclear submarines. HMAS *Anzac* will pay off immediately. I suspect that avoids an expensive life extension refit and reduces manpower shortfalls. I suspect more info will follow.

From the Australian Defence Magazine:

Australia's future surface fleet will feature a new class of 7-11 general purpose frigates plus only six of the nine planned Hunter-class frigates configured for anti-submarine warfare. The long-awaited surface combatant fleet review also recommends acquisition of six Large Optionally Crewed Surface Vessels (LOSV). These would be acquired through formal engagement with the US Navy but constructed in Australia. Each would be equipped with 32 Vertical Launching System cells providing enhanced lethality for anti-air warfare and surface strike. There will be some significant enhancements. The DDG Aegis combat system will be upgraded from baseline eight to nine as a matter of urgency while the Hunters will be equipped with capability to launch Tomahawk missiles. Planning for eventual replacement of the DDGs will get under way in the context of the 2026 National Defence Strategy.

United States

The US will soon have up to five carrier strike groups in the western Pacific including US Ships *Ronald Reagan*, *Carl Vinson*, *Theodore Roosevelt*, *George Washington* and *Abraham Lincoln*. If at normal strength means more than 400 combat aircraft as well plus the necessary escort groups. They will be exercising and practicing integration with allies. The message is clear: this is an excellent example of deterrence in action for the enemies the US and allies.

Moldova

The Institute for the Study of War has stated that Moscow is setting 'information conditions' necessary for the conduct of hybrid warfare. Russia has always conducted some form of information operations in Moldova especially through the breakaway area of Transnistria and through political parties sympathetic to Moscow such as the Shor Party of Ilan Shor. There is a sizeable part of the population uncomfortable with some aspects of the west. Moscow has used this apprehension effectively to cause considerable disruption. Most has been caught before it became too serious although pro-Moscow parties have been elected in certain parts of the country. The EU and NATO have missions to help Moldova modernize their security service and military, at the same time helping Moldova to more closely align with the West. This, however, has not stopped Russia's efforts. Moldova stopped most Russian media outlets from broadcasting as a way to mitigate against Moscow's actions.

The wreckage of another Shaheed drone was discovered in Moldova. Once again there was no damage and it appears that it was not targeted against Moldova.

Reuters reported that Moldova's newly appointed Foreign Minister Mihai Popsoi stated that he believed that Moldova entry talks with the EU will likely begin before June 2024. Moldova is making every effort to speed up the process for ascension to the EU.

Belarus

Several reliable media outlets have reported that the self-proclaimed President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, stated that 'saboteurs' were detained at the border. The "team" consisted of Ukrainians and Belarus citizens and were carrying explosives, and were caught by a counter-terrorism operation conducted by Belarus authorities. He also stated this occurred several times a week. While this may be true, there does not seem to be much reaction from these saboteur teams to an ambush/counter terrorism operation. It seems dubious.

The self-declared President of Belarus after discussion with Vladimir Putin announced that all citizens must be ready mentally and physically for war. It seems that his days of perhaps sitting on the fence may be coming to a close one way or another.

Israel-Hamas War

Israel's timeline for the handing over of Hamas held hostages else an attack on Rafah is by early March. Israel has made it quite clear that only the delivery of the hostages held by Hamas and the surrender of remaining Hamas troops would be acceptable. It is likely that Israel will have to continue fighting to stop Hamas from acquiring a "win." Keep in mind that Hamas has continually used the citizens of Gaza as human shields since the start of the war. The UN itself bears much of the responsibility for the situation by allowing the construction of a massive underground fortress under Gaza and the syphoning off of billions of donated dollars for this to occur. The UN has not been trusted by Israel for a very long time and for good reason.

Israel is now before the International Court of Justice for two separate charges, one questioning whether Israel actually "occupied" Palestinian lands and second whether they are in fact committing genocide of the Palestinian people in this most recent conflict. Some of the countries providing judges are actually candidates for charges on various of their own activities.

A ceasefire sponsored by the Arab states of UN was vetoed by the US because it did not state that the hostages had to be returned. The US will be submitting its own ceasefire proposal to the UN in the near future.

The Houthis are continuing their attacks on shipping in the Red Sea with limited success, but success none the less. The EU is also establishing its own naval mission in support of shipping but not under US command. It was notable this week when the Houthis used an unmanned underwater drone which was sunk by allied naval forces. This is likely to continue. One suspects a more forceful allied action is not too far off but the timing and execution are still unknown and likely to stay that way until it occurs.

Russia-Ukraine War

The war is continuing with increasing urgency on the part of the Russians. They were successful in achieving the capture of Avdiikva last week after ten years. Avdiikva has been defended by Ukraine since Russia's first unlawful invasion in 2014. The Ukrainians have placed the blame squarely on the US House of Representatives and their self-serving actions which prevented the timely arrival of ammunition. Even a considerable number of Republicans have found this to be unacceptable, however, the Speaker of the House failed to even place it on the order paper. It was a sad day for the liberal democracies and especially for the Ukrainian defenders. Most European countries have now started to improve their defence capabilities and achieve the NATO 2% of GDP spending. 18 countries out of 31 have failed to achieve this goal, now considered the basement of spending under the new circumstances. Canada continues to be a freeloader and doing the base minimum. Canadian defence spending is a mere 1.38% of GDP with little indication that this will improve in the near future.

Russia is currently carrying out a series of attacks along the entire front but with specific goals in mind such as a Krynky in the south, Robotny an area of Zaporihizhia, east Avdiikva and in the north near Kupiansk. They currently have amassed more than 400k troops plus equipment to conduct these operations. Russia will likely continue these operations to take advantage of Ukraine's low ammunition supply.

US intelligence sources have stated that it is likely that Russia is considering placing nuclear weapons in space although the Kremlin was quick to deny such an action -but Russia has lied before such as guaranteeing Ukraine's borders. The thought is that Russia might set off an explosion in space causing an electromagnetic pulse. This wouldn't kill anyone but it would cause wide spread damage across the globe. Such an action would likely result in a severe non-nuclear response by NATO, still, such an action would result in a slowed response.

The Ukrainians conducted a very successful withdrawal while in contact. It is a measure of the skill and fortitude of Ukrainian troops that this occurred although some were captured. There are allegations that the Russians executed at least some of the captured troops. Russian losses in Avdiikva have been nothing short of disastrous with manpower and equipment losses being extremely high. Russia was able to put between 40 and 50k troops on the ground for the final push. The town is leveled and Russian losses are such that the term a pyrrhic victory applies. Russian bloggers and serving officers have been highly critical of the Russian methods used during the siege. Most of these soldiers were the best available to Russia; their loss will affect the entire campaign.

While Russia was achieving success on the ground, the air force was taking its most severe losses in recent events. A total of seven of the most modern operational aircraft were shot down in three separate incidents in the past five days including at least five SU-34 fighter bombers and two SU-35 air superiority aircraft. Given that even with increased production of aircraft the loss is equal to one third of a year's production of all aircraft and more specifically more than a year's worth of SU-34 which currently runs production at four per year. It is thought that Ukraine brought in one of its two Patriot batteries to create an air trap. A third Patriot battery is being donated by Germany. It was also announced that Ukraine's first

operational F-16 will become available in June with more arriving before the end of the year. Russia has never achieved air superiority during this war, even against Ukraine's diminished air force.

Lastly in this section the Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was killed in a Russian prison. Allegedly agents flew from Moscow and disabled the prison video and audio system before supposedly meeting Mr Navalny after which he is said to have died of sudden death syndrome. While Navalny is considered a hero by many Russians, it is an image of the "tragic hero" that is found so often in Russia's tortured history. Putin officially retains over 70% approval rating despite the horrific consequences of the war. Security forces have been effective at stifling opposition but the official figures are known to be false. Russian history is replete with supposed support for the Czar only for him to be assassinated. Putin lives in his own bubble, his interview with Tucker Carlson was to say the least bizarre. His understanding of Russia's history was based on a fiction, one thinks of his own mind. One can only hope that his echo chamber opens at some point and reality shines in and he realizes his mistakes. This is unlikely in the near term but may come more quickly than one expects.

China

The Communist Chinese Party (CCP) is the governing party of mainland China. It often takes the point of view that all Chinese are its citizens; it does not recognize dual citizenship. The CCP does not represent the best interests of all Chinese, it in fact only fulfills one real function, its continued existence, in other words its survival. All other considerations are subordinate to this overriding goal. In China itself, members constitute somewhere between 7 and 8% of the population. It is not monolithic but is made up of various factions and even sub-factions. In order to gain power, factions often compete between factions and even sub-factions. To gain personal power, one usually has to perform well for the local leadership more akin to an organized crime gang than a political party. Even in Xi's faction there are sub-factions which lust for power and seek to either give good news or essentially inform on other sub-factions. Most of Xi's sub-factions are from locations or jobs that Xi had created, relationships and loyalty and thus when Xi gained power, these factions became more powerful and in some cases had to be disciplined so as not to gain too much power so as to create problems for Xi. At present, because of Xi's incompetence in dealing with financial and economic matters as well as his bizarre handling of the Covid 19 crisis, he has had to endure criticism from the Jiang Zheming faction who have now placed one of their own in charge of financial issues. Xi is not invulnerable and inter-factional conflict continues. One wonders if Xi will become very ill?

China is the second largest economy in the world. It has constantly increased its overall GDP steadily since the era of Deng Xiaoping in the late 1980s. With the exception of the period following the tragic Tiananmen Square massacre, China has opened its economy and has had steady growth, lifting hundreds of millions out of poverty. The main method was the creation of vast amounts of debt. Most of this debt was to promote the growth of cities and the subsequent infrastructure to support large populations. Many of these early projects were necessary to support large populations of rural citizens moving to new industrial urban centres.

What happened is this model continued long after the investment in building this infrastructure provided less value than the cost, yet it continued for years after this became true.

The main problem is that bad news in any authoritarian regime usually means the unfortunate bearer of said bad news is punished despite not being actually responsible. Those who created the situation stayed in place or quietly retired and so the lies continued throughout the economy and although there were positive figures showing miraculous growth, this growth actually sowed the seeds of destruction. So much infrastructure and little or no money for maintenance and upkeep. This cycle has continued with more and more infrastructure being built but without anyone to purchase the new houses, apartments and transportation systems or to allow them to offset the costs. It was and is a cycle that has led China to an unhappy place. Some Western economists suggest that China's economy is actually declining despite officials stating recently that China achieved 5.2% growth last year. It is as with most official figures a fiction.

The Chinese stock markets have lost the equivalent of 6.5t USD within this past year. The Hong Kong market has actually shrunk to the same size it was when the British handed over Hong Kong in 1997. Foreign investors continue to leave the markets and overall the foreign investment has been negative since 2019 and continuing to plunge further. Chinese investors are also leaving China for "greener pastures" or at least ones that do not say "Made in China" or face Western sanctions. The CCP has been increasing regulations that cause concern for further investment, and foreign firms are heading for safer, less onerous locations such as Vietnam and Bangladesh. The bottom line is that investors, whether foreign or Chinese, now understand the seriousness of these accumulating fictional figures and realize China's economy is not actually in great shape and is based on a flawed system. The CCP has done its "best" to provide the appearance of openness to investment but new regulations especially in regard to security issues tell a very different story.

Infrastructure issues also extend to the military as well. One sees constant articles on the enlargement of the Chinese naval forces which is nearly 400 vessels with many being relatively sophisticated warships, including aircraft carriers, assault carriers, landing ships, destroyers, frigates, corvettes, nuclear and conventional submarines, logistics and depot ships, etc. Yet as with land infrastructure, are they able to maintain this large fleet? One is reminded of the Soviet Navy of nearly a thousand vessels, yet in the long run, although they were painted and looked good, many were defective and poorly designed and there was no real structure to maintain such a vast fleet. China has not fought a naval war for well over a century, and its senior staff and senior commanders are promoted for their loyalty to the party rather than technical expertise. Even today, the political officer outranks the operational commander. In the recent past the navy was the first of the services to be purged in Xi's first term as President and Party General Secretary. Its command structure was corrupt and incompetent. Although China has made vast strides for operational competence, it has never been tried in real operations except for the ongoing escort force operating in the Indian Ocean environs. It has few support bases and China's own reputation prevents the acquisition of new facilities. It is not likely to be a real threat to allied naval forces in the near term and its own organizational structure may be enough to keep it from being a real threat.

The Peoples' Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) was the first of the armed forces to be purged but this past year it is not the only service to need purging of corrupt officers. These purges will keep the military from becoming a threat to the Party but at the same time will keep them from being truly competent as operational leaders.

Membership Renewal

Dear RUSI(NS) Members,

We trust this message finds you well. As we move forward into 2024, it's time to renew our commitment and continue our valuable contribution to the Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia. Before we detail the membership fee structure and payment methods, it's crucial for all members to note an important update regarding the renewal process.

Online Membership Renewal Form - Mandatory for All Members: This year, we are streamlining our membership renewal process. It is mandatory for all members, without exception, to complete the online Membership Renewal Form available on our website. This step ensures that our records are accurate and up-to-date, allowing us to serve you better and keep you informed about upcoming events and initiatives. To complete your Membership Renewal Form, please visit: <https://rusi-ns.ca/membership/>

After completing the online form, you can proceed with the membership fee payment. Here are the details for your 2024 membership renewal:

1. **Membership Fee for 2024:** We continue to maintain the membership fee at a modest amount of \$25.00 CAD. Recognizing the diverse preferences of our members, we offer multiple payment methods:

a) **Credit Card Payment:** Choose this option on the membership renewal webform to pay by credit card. A small processing fee of \$1.25 will be added. You will be redirected to our secure payment portal to finalize your transaction.

b) **Electronic Money Transfer (EMT):** For EMT payments, kindly send \$25.00 to RUSINovascotia@gmail.com. This process is seamless and does not require a password. Post-transfer, ensure to enter your transaction reference number on the membership renewal webform.

c) **Cheque:** If paying by cheque is your preference, please mail it to the address below after filling out the membership renewal webform:

RUSI(NS)
c/o BOR CFB Halifax
PO Box 99000 Station Forces
Halifax, NS
B3K 5X5
Attn: Treasurer

2. Special Notes:

Life Members: No renewal fee is required. However, you will receive an email shortly to confirm your current contact details.

New Members (Joined after July 31, 2023): Your 2024 membership fee is waived, but you must complete the online renewal form. Select "Electronic Money Transfer" on the form and note "first year member" in the comments.

3. Financial Assistance: We understand that some members may face financial challenges. If you need support with the membership fee, please contact us confidentially at RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com.

4. Donations: Your generosity fuels our initiatives. To make a donation, please visit <https://rusi-ns.ca/donations/>.

5. Important Note on Communication and Receipts:

Our executive team and the entire membership renewal team are dedicated professionals serving full-time in their respective agencies. Due to our commitment to various pressing responsibilities, there might be a slight delay in our email correspondence. We appreciate your understanding and patience in this matter.

Furthermore, receipts for membership fees will be issued upon request. If you require a receipt, please make sure to email us specifying your need.

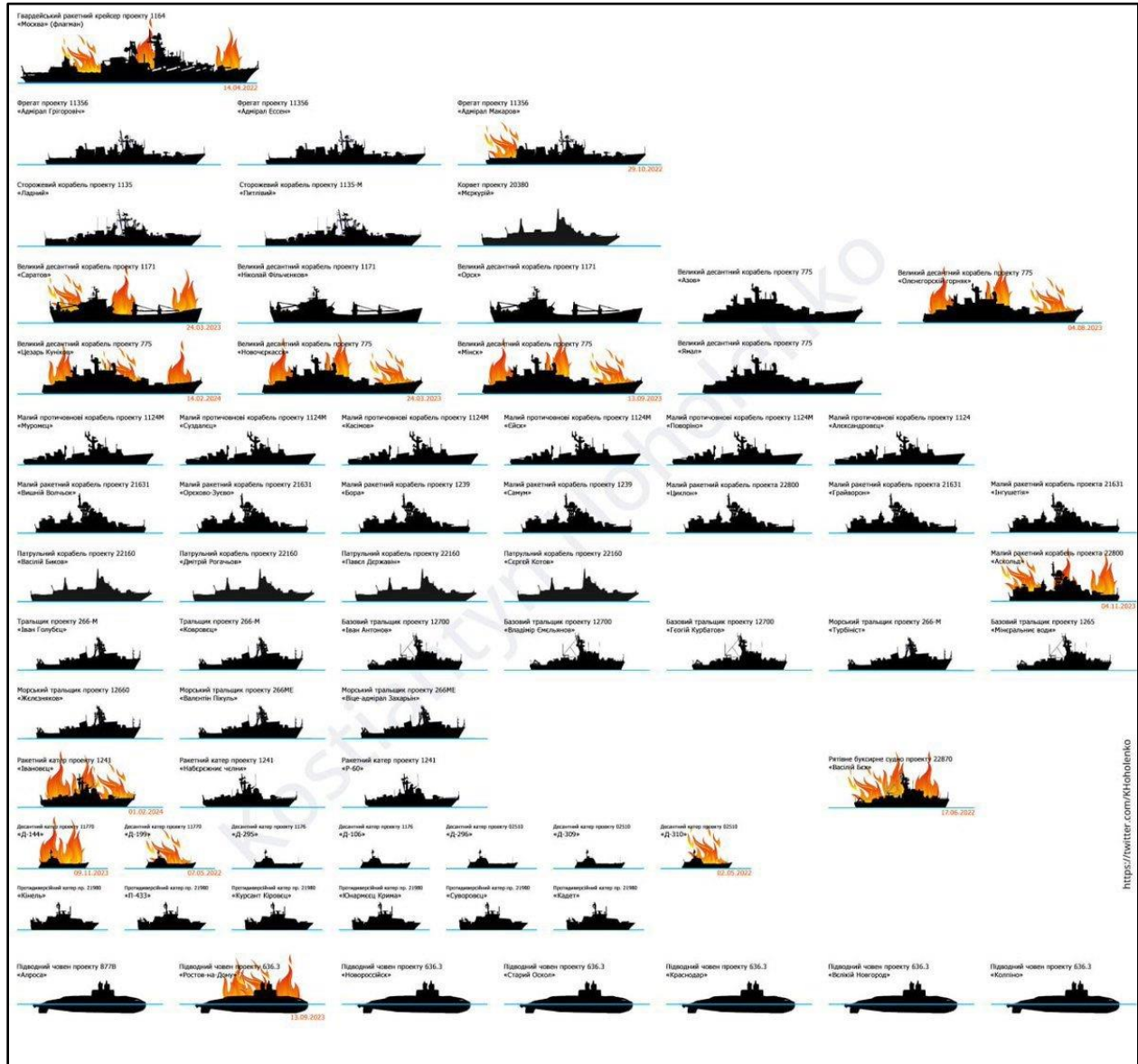
For any assistance with the renewal form or payment methods, feel free to reach out to our Treasurer, Deepak Prasad, at RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com.

Thank you for your continued support and active participation. Your engagement is vital to our mission of fostering informed discussions and research on national security and defense.

Warm Regards,
Inspector Blair Bannerman
Secretary
Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia

Loss Tracking

Robinson Mitchell #Fella @ru_research 14 Feb posted: Ukrainian ships have destroyed nearly a third of Russia's vaunted Black Sea Fleet, in a land war - a country which doesn't even have a navy. Russia has not sunk any Ukrainian ships - their one ship, a Krivak-class Corvette, was scuttled early in the war to prevent it from becoming a prize



<https://twitter.com/KHoholenko>

IISS News @IISS_org 13 Feb posted: 'In the past year, Russia has lost around 1,120 tanks, and 2,000 armoured personnel and infantry fighting vehicles. It has now lost more tanks on the battlefield than it had when it launched its offensive in 2022' | @B_Giegerich #MilitaryBalance



Indo-Pacific

Says something when Canada doesn't get included but two non-Pacific states (okay, they still have territories there...) do.

Chart date: February 16, 2024

Naval Chart of 11 navies - By @IndoPac_Info - Indo-Pacific News

SHIP TYPE	CHINA	USA	RUSSIA	JAPAN	SOUTH KOREA	NORTH KOREA	INDIA	PAKISTAN	AUSTRALIA	UK	FRANCE
Super Carriers: 90K+ tons, CAT OBAR	1 Fujian, in sea trials	11 Nimitz / Ford Class									
Aircraft Carriers	2 Liaoning & Shandong		1 Kuznetsov	2 Isuzu class			2 Vikram & Vikrant			2 Q. Elizabeth Class	1 Charles De Gaulle
Helicopter Carriers				2 Hyuga class	2 Dokdo class						
Amphibious Assault: (LHA / LHD)	3 Type 075	9 Wasp & America Class							2 Camberra Class		3 Mistral Class
Amphibious Transport Dock LPD	6 Type 071	12 San Antonio Class		3 Osumi Class			1 INS Jalashwa		1 HMS Choules	2 Albatross class	
Cruisers / Very Large Destroyers	8 Type 055	18 Tara & Zumwalt Class	4 Kirov & Slava Class		3 Sejong the Great						
Destroyers	42	73 Buckley Class	10	36	9		12		3 Hobart class	6 Type 45	10 Horizon & Aegis
Frigates	47 Type 54 / 56A / 53H3		22	4 Mugeni Class	16		12	9	8 Anzac class	11 Type 23	5 Le Fayette Class
Light Frigates 1800+ tons		23 LCS Ships	10 Stargatshchy & Grenyashchy	6 Abukuma Class		2					
Missile Corvettes 450-1700 tons	50 Type 056 / 056A		60		3	4	18	7			
SS Submarines (Diesel Electric)	47 Yuan Yang, Kilo, Ming		22	23	20	76 Plus 20 midget subs	16	5	6 Colinet Class		
SSN Submarines (Nuclear Prop.)	6 Type 093 / 093A	53 Includes 4 SSBN	27 Includes 12 SSBN & 3 SP							6 Astute & Trafalgar Class	5 Rubis & Siphon Class
SSBN Strategic Submarines	6 Jin Class	14 Ohio-class	12 7 Borj & 5 Delta IV							4 Vanguard Class	4 Triomphant Class

NATO DEFENSE SPENDING

% OF REAL 2023 GDP

