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RUSI VI

Newsletter of the
Royal United Services Institute of
Vancouver Island

See the RUSI VI Calendar of Events on last
page

FEAR AND DREAD: Russia's strategy to dismantle North Atlantic and European security cooperation (July 2018)

The following is the Exec Summary of this report from the MacDonald-Laurier Institute. The full report can be accessed at this link: [Fear and Dread](#)

NATO may be facing greater internal challenges in light of uncertainty around the Trump administration, its frequent hectoring on defence spending, and the soft tack the president has taken when dealing with Russia. Yet that should not overshadow the fact that NATO's immediate problem is external – to meet the sustained Russian challenge to European security and stability.

Moscow uses conventional military and nuclear menacing to ramp up fear, danger, and risk for NATO. Russia has also launched an information war to influence the European and North American debate about identity politics, nationalism, and multilateral organizations. Indeed, Russia has started a new round of empire building, first by annexing Crimea and intervening in Ukraine, and later with its intervention in Syria.

Moscow is playing a two-level game. At home, these actions solidify support for the strict authoritarianism run out of the Kremlin. Abroad, these actions make NATO and EU members cautious and, by default, respectful of Russia. They put the brakes on a common NATO response and further polarize Western democratic processes, thus providing the strategic and political space for Russia to make its sudden moves.

Russia threatens NATO, the European Union, and all democracies of the Euro-Atlantic region in three ways: by conducting intimidating military exercises on NATO's border, by making overt threats to NATO members near its borders as well as partners such as Sweden, and by discarding established arms control and political agreements pertaining to the European theatre concluded in the 1990s. Because of NATO's Article 5 collective defence clause, all Allies are at risk when one is threatened.

The military threat is combined with an information warfare campaign whose goal is nothing less than breaking up the political, economic, and military framework of European and North Atlantic cooperation. When NATO and the European Union lose public support, cooperation breaks down and national interests take over. In a fragmented Europe, Russia gains power and influence.

It is crucial to understand that Russia aims for equal status with the United States and is willing to humiliate and intimidate NATO nations in support of that goal.

For Russia, respect is a product of power and strength. NATO has no choice but to demonstrate that the values and interests it protects are also worth military strength and power. There is no need to be provocative, but there must be ample proportionate strength to ensure that Russia sees the boundaries of its own plans and actions. To that extent, NATO has a lot of work to do in building up its capacity to defend against and deter Russia. The Alliance's capacity to defend is paper-thin and its capacity to reinforce its position in Eastern Europe and the Baltics is still non-existent. As long as NATO does not pose a serious counter, the Kremlin will continue to exploit opportunities for coercion and aggression.



Sea King: Going out with style

By Lieutenant-Colonel Travis Chapman
News Article / July 26, 2018

Designed in the late 1950s and procured by Canada through a dynamic acquisition program in the early 1960s, the CH-124 Sea King helicopter has served Canadians with distinction since May 24, 1963. Longevity, avionics and mission system upgrades, and the utility of a medium-lift helicopter came together to create a legacy that ignites a passion spanning multiple generations, unlike any other Royal Canadian Air Force asset.

The CH-124 pre-dates Bill C-243, “The Canadian Forces Reorganization Act”, and so the Sikorsky HSS-2 was acquired as a Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) anti-submarine warfare (ASW) weapon system, and was designated CHSS-2 upon entering Canadian service. A maritime helicopter, it has operated from aircraft carrier Her Majesty’s Canadian Ship (HMCS) Bonaventure, St. Laurent-class destroyer escorts and Iroquois-class destroyers, auxiliary oiler replenishment ships, and Halifax-class frigates.

In many ways, Canada’s efforts to embark a large aircraft on a small flight deck revolutionized the concept of organic air support to naval operations by showing the theoretical to be possible. Given the capabilities of a larger helicopter, crews could carry more armament, more fuel, and a suite of avionics—with capacity for growth. Considering the rapid advancement of submarine capabilities in the 1950s, the CHSS-2 became

a potent counter-punch to non-friendly submarines. Over time, it proved capable of acting as an autonomous, multi-role ASW weapon system through several permanent and temporary modifications that included radar, sonobuoy processing, GPS, automatic identification system, tactical common datalink, and various iterations of tactical navigation computers, as well as the development of aircraft-specific tactics for crews to employ.

Currently, the Sea King is flown by squadrons belonging to 12 Wing Shearwater, Nova Scotia.

To pay tribute to the history of Canada's esteemed maritime helicopter, Major Trevor Cadeau, 443 Maritime Helicopter Squadron aircraft maintenance engineering officer, initiated a project in December 2017 with technical and operational staff at Director Aerospace Equipment Program Management (Maritime) and 1 Canadian Air Division to change Sea King tail number CH12417's modern livery to one inspired by the original RCN livery from 1963 (as pictured on aircraft 4005), and previously applied in 2010 to commemorate the Canadian Naval Centennial.

The success of the latest livery project belongs to a large team from Patricia Bay, British Columbia; Shearwater, Nova Scotia; Ottawa, Ontario; and Winnipeg, Manitoba. Essential to its impressive execution were technicians from 12 Air Maintenance Squadron (AMS), and 423 and 443 Maritime Helicopter Squadrons.

Of course, once painted, it had to be reassembled. Again, personnel from 12 AMS, and 423 and 443 Squadrons worked tirelessly, putting the aircraft back together.

Not only does the special paint scheme honour the Sea King's history and exceptional contributions to RCN and RCAF operations over the last 55 years, but the project presented an uncommon professional development opportunity for many aircraft structures technicians. Those involved in the project were able to exercise their own painting skill sets, using the new paint booth in the 12 AMS hangar in Shearwater, Nova Scotia.

In addition to CH12417, team members also repainted aircraft CH12401 in preparation for its induction into the Shearwater Aviation Museum.

Although 423 Squadron ceased Sea King flight operations on Canada's east coast in January 2018, and has already transitioned to the CH-148 Cyclone, 443 Squadron, which belongs to 12 Wing but is based at Patricia Bay, has been flying the CH-124 throughout 2018 in support of deployed operations onboard HMCS St. John's, and domestic taskings and advanced force generation at Arundel Castle in Patricia Bay.

On June 13, 2018, a crew from 443 Squadron left Shearwater on a cross-country ferry flight bringing CH12417 from the home of maritime aviation in Shearwater to Pat Bay. 443 Squadron is proud of our history and success with the Sea King, and will enthusiastically fly CH12417 during the fleet's final six months of RCAF service.

Over the summer, civilians and service personnel can expect to see CH12417 in its new clothes at various airshows, and in the skies over Victoria and Pat Bay. Adding an extra dose of excitement, Cyclones will operate alongside Sea Kings at 443 Squadron from August until the end of December 2018.

Post-retirement, it is expected that CH12417 will remain at 443 Squadron as a "gate guardian". It will also be present at the Sea King Retirement 2018 festivities planned in Victoria from November 30 to December 1, 2018. The organizing committee is planning an impassioned salute to this workhorse's 55 years of service to Canada, and CH12417 should feature prominently in both the flying and ground events.

The livery is an outstanding testament to our pride in our aircraft and our community's history. It is a fitting compliment to a weapon system that has served generations of Canadians at home, and Canada's foreign policy abroad, for more than 55 years.

How China Built an Army of Influence Agents in the U.S.

Bethany.Allen@thedailybeast.com (Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian)

2018-07-21



© Provided by The Daily Beast Photo Illustration by Elizabeth Brockway/The Daily BeastIn

In May, a classified Australian government report revealed that the Chinese Communist Party had spent the last decade attempting to influence every level of that nation’s government and politics.

“Unlike Russia, which seems to be as much for a good time rather than a long time, the Chinese are strategic, patient, and they set down foundations of organizations and very consistent narratives over a long period of time,” said the author of the report in March.

“They put an enormous amount of effort into making sure we don’t talk about what it’s doing.”

Commissioned by Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull in the wake of a series of Chinese influence scandals that rocked Australian politics last year, the report, compiled under the auspices of an intelligence agency, examined Chinese attempts to influence politicians, political donations, media, and academia.

But such a report could easily be written about the United States—and may soon be. U.S. intelligence agencies have long tracked Beijing’s clandestine attempts at political influence inside the United States.

And they don't like what they see. One former CIA analyst put it bluntly: Beijing's agents in this country aim "to turn Americans against their own government's interests and their society's interests."

Unlike Australia, however, American society has yet to engage in a broad public debate about the issue. Most Americans have never even heard of the main conduit of such influence, an obscure but sprawling Chinese Communist Party agency known as the United Front.

The organization has been around in one form or another since the World War II era. Mao famously referred to the United Front as one of the Communist Party's "magic weapons." These days, United Front operations sometimes resemble the CIA's soft attempts to buy off, co-opt, or coerce influential community leaders. Sometimes it functions like a booster club for pro-party locals, or like an advocacy group trying to sway public opinion. Sometimes it works in concert with China's traditional intelligence agencies, such as the Ministry of State Security, to gather information or apply pressure. And United Front networks may sometimes play a role in facilitating intellectual property theft and soft intelligence collection, though that role isn't always clear.

What is clear is that the United Front is active in dozens of U.S. cities and has been for years, with almost no one the wiser.

Standing in front of a ruby-red backdrop, a Chinese diplomat's hand resting lighting on her lower back, He Xiaohui looked radiant. The Chinese-American woman, a local activist in Maryland politics, had just been appointed president of the National Association for China's Peaceful Unification in Washington, D.C., which describes itself as a non-profit for Chinese-Americans dedicated to the eventual unification of China with Taiwan.

He Xiaohui posed for a photo with the previous president, who was symbolically handing over an object to her. Presiding over the January 13 handover was Li Kexin, a high-profile minister at the Chinese embassy in Washington. Li stood between two, a hand on each of their backs.

"No matter the time, no matter the situation, the Chinese government and 1.4 billion Chinese people will always have your back," said Li in his remarks. "I believe that this new cohort of leadership will continue... to unite the power of overseas Chinese, and hold high the banners of anti-independence and peaceful unification."

On paper, peaceful reunification associations, such as the Washington, D.C. branch, are independent from both the Chinese government and, largely, each other. But functionally, these associations are the United Front's most ubiquitous outposts in the United States. And as the leader of one of the oldest such associations in the world, He, who also goes by Helen, serves as a top point of contact between the Chinese Communist Party in Beijing and the Chinese-American community in greater Washington, D.C.

"Peaceful reunification associations"—the term refers to Beijing's intent to obtain sovereignty over Taiwan—have a close relationship with the United Front Work Department, in some cases functioning almost as an extension of its Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, the government agency that focuses on outreach to the Chinese diaspora. (Sun Chunlan, who until 2017 directed the United Front Work Department, simultaneously served as the executive vice president of the China Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Unification in Beijing.)

The peaceful reunification association has established chapters in over 70 countries, according to the organization's website. In the United States, there are more than 30 chapters in cities across the country, including San Francisco, Chicago, Houston, New York, and Washington, D.C. And while "peaceful

reunification” was one of the original aims of United Front work, the associations in different countries may engage on many issues, including territorial integrity flashpoints such as Tibet, Hong Kong, and maritime claims in the East and South China Seas.

Peaceful reunification associations serve as one of the CCP’s main connection points with Chinese-American communities. They function as welcome centers for visiting government officials, as platforms for the dissemination of party propaganda, as hubs that allow Beijing to identify and potentially co-opt prominent community members, and as centers for local community organizing, such as hosting cultural events.

The Washington branch is particularly illustrious. Founded in 1973, it was one of the earliest such organizations, and Beijing has praised its accomplishments. The organization sent a delegation to Beijing in 2015, where they met Tan Tianxing, the deputy director of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office. Tan praised the organization, saying that since its founding in 1973, the Washington branch has “done a lot of useful work” to “fight Taiwanese independence and promote unification.”

At its heart, United Front strategy involves amplifying friendly voices and suppressing critical ones. After the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, the CCP realized that it had a major global image problem, and it feared that the pro-democracy movement would flourish in overseas Chinese communities and then seep back in China. So the party launched what would become a decades-long expansion of United Front activity abroad, particularly among diaspora communities. The aim was to build party-linked networks in overseas Chinese communities, keep them connected to Beijing, and quash any anti-party organizing.

These overseas efforts have targeted independent Chinese-language media outlets, Chinese student and community groups, Chinese businesses and organizations, and increasingly, prominent non-Chinese individuals and organizations, including campaign donors and politicians, with the goal of convincing them to promote Beijing’s policies and interests in their host countries.

Anne-Marie Brady, a fellow at the Wilson Center who researches the United Front’s activities in New Zealand, describes the goal of United Front work among overseas Chinese communities as “[getting] the community to proactively and even better, spontaneously, engage in activities which enhance China’s foreign policy agenda.”

Peter Mattis, a former CIA China analyst and a research fellow in China studies at the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, takes it a step further.

“The purpose of this department is to turn Americans against their own government’s interests and their society’s interests,” he told *The Daily Beast*. “It’s undermining the integrity of our democracy and it’s getting Americans to do it themselves.”

And by targeting Chinese-Americans, “it foments discord and encourages racial divisions. And what’s worse is, I think the party knows it.”

“They’re essentially taunting foreign governments like the United States to turn on their Chinese populations,” Mattis added.

United Front activity creates discord within the Chinese-American community as well. It actively creates pro-Beijing groups and pits them against Taiwanese and Tibetan groups, dissidents, and Falun Gong practitioners. As one Taiwanese-American told *The Daily Beast*, “It’s like everyone is in a faction and they’re trying to gauge what faction you’re in.”

In Australia, a major scandal unfolded last year after it was revealed that Huang Xiangmo, a top political donor and president of the country's peaceful reunification association, had attempted to use his donations to sway Australia's position on the South China Sea, a hotly contested region that China claims as its own. In New Zealand, the peaceful reunification association organizes Chinese community members to fundraise and block-vote for China-friendly politicians.

Less public scrutiny has been applied to peaceful reunification associations in the United States, so less is known about their activities. But according to former Western intelligence officials, the United Front and its U.S.-based proxies actively cultivate ties to campaign donors in America. And the United Front has made it clear that it wants overseas Chinese to get involved in their respective countries' politics to sway things in China's favor.

And that's exactly what He Xiaohui, the newly appointed head of Washington's peaceful reunification association, has said Chinese-Americans ought to do.

"Helen" He came to the United States in 1988. In the 2000s, she became politically active in Maryland, lobbying the state government to make Chinese lunar new year an official holiday, founding an umbrella group for Chinese hometown associations called the Coordination Council of Chinese American Associations, and organizing voter drives in the Chinese community. In 2010, she was awarded the Governor's Volunteer Service Award. She has also donated to the campaigns of local and state-level politicians.

Or at least, that's what her English-language online footprint says. Chinese-language sources paint a different picture.

In 2005, He said in an interview with official party mouthpiece *People's Daily* that Chinese people in America should get involved in civic spaces to oppose Taiwan independence and to "fight for the support of American people for China to achieve unification." Unification with Taiwan, which has ruled itself since 1949, is one of the party's top core interests.

In April, in an interview with the pro-Beijing newspaper *Qiao Bao*, for example, He criticized the recently-passed Taiwan Travel Act, which makes it easier for government officials from the U.S. and Taiwan to visit each other, and the 2018 National Defense Authorization act, saying they "interfered in China's internal affairs" and "seriously violated the One-China Principle."

Statements such as these are a window into He's views, but also demonstrate a specific United Front strategy. When the United States adopts a policy that Beijing doesn't like, official news outlets and website can approach people like He for comment, then tout those statements as evidence that Chinese-Americans don't approve of Washington's latest move. One intended audiences for this evidence is Chinese people in China -- it serves to bolster the party's image as receiving support from Chinese around the world, not just at home.

He has worked for years in local-level community and political organizing in Maryland, and has become known among Maryland politicians for her ability to reach the Chinese community. Lily Qi, a current Democratic nominee for Maryland state delegate, described He as "one of those great connectors to pay attention to local level." If you need to reach out to the local Chinese community, Qi told *The Daily Beast*, "she would always step up, more than most people, and follow through." (Helen He did not respond to a request for comment).

That level of influence is just what United Front officials look for as they scout out potential recruits.

In 2009, while serving as president of the Chinese hometown associations group, He was invited to Beijing to serve as an overseas delegate to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), one of China's two rubber-stamp legislatures and another important United Front body that identifies influential overseas Chinese and aims to incorporate them into the party's overseas goals.

Being chosen as a CPPCC delegate means that "these people are recognized by the [Chinese] party-state," said Gerry Groot, who researched the United Front and serves as head of the department of Asian studies at the University of Adelaide in Australia. "The United Front department has seen these people as being influential and important in their communities, and is seeking to increase or deepen their ties to China, as the ancestral land."

"In rewarding them, those people get status in their communities back home," continued Groot, "and in many cases it increases their influence back home. And that means that these people go back much more committed to supporting the party than they were."

A common thread runs through much of the United Front's related activities in the United States and other Western democracies. It uses the freedoms guaranteed in liberal democracies to promote Beijing's own ends. At times it resembles the tools that democracies such as the United States use to promote their own interests—funding friendly media outlets, recruiting sympathetic locals—but Chinese influence operations often employ elements of secrecy, coercion, and repression that the United States usually does not.

It also means that any response to the United Front must be carefully calibrated to preserve the rights and freedoms of Chinese-Americans.

"It is tempting to frame all party-state encroachment as a national security issue," wrote Mattis and Samantha Hoffman, a research fellow at the Mercator Institute for China Studies in Berlin, in May. But "bringing national security tools to bear risks what makes America exceptional. As the CCP tightens its grip, the United States should extend an open hand. It means ensuring Chinese students, scholars, and perhaps future Americans do not have their right to liberty impeded on American soil."

"Rising to China's challenge, however, is as much about being a better America as it is finding the appropriate strategic response."

Whenever Chinese President Xi Jinping makes high-profile visits to cities abroad— whether Washington, Prague, or Auckland—he is almost invariably greeted by crowds of enthusiastic Chinese students wearing red t-shirts and carrying signs proclaiming their support. They line the streets outside of the meeting venue, sometimes for days, and local media outlets tend to be impressed with the level of committed patriotism that Chinese students display for their country's leader, who has overseen a sweeping ideological crackdown on Chinese society and higher education.

But such demonstrations are often organized by Chinese consular officials, who work through the Chinese Student and Scholar Associations, or CSSAs, that exist on the campuses of universities around the United States and many other countries. CSSAs are another good example of United Front strategy at work in the United States. There are between 100 and 150 CSSAs at universities around the United States, and many of them are quite large and influential on campus. These are not the only Chinese student groups in the U.S., but unlike other groups, CSSAs typically consider themselves to be under the "official guidance" of the consulate—language they often include on their websites in Chinese but not in English. Many or most CSSAs receive funding from the Chinese embassy.

In return for their assistance and funding, Chinese consular officials make occasional political “asks” of CSSAs. These asks include quiet political mobilization campaigns. Any time a top Chinese leader visits a U.S. city, consular officials will direct student groups to wear red t-shirts, carry Chinese flags, hold enthusiastic signs, and fan out onto the streets to welcome the visiting leader. Sometimes the consulates offer cash compensation to students, up to \$60 per day in some cases. They often provide the t-shirts and flags, may pay for transportation, and may provide food and snacks.

Chinese students are joined by delegations from other Chinese community organizations such as hometown associations who have received similar directives from the consulates, creating sizable crowds that easily drown out small groups of Chinese dissidents or other protesters. The resulting reports in both Western and Chinese language media typically portray these activities as “patriotic” demonstrations by “supporters of Beijing.”

There’s another reason the party wants to organize such large crowds. As participants have told *The Daily Beast*, one goal is to take up as much space as possible in prime locations in front of meeting venues so that would-be dissidents simply have no room to lodge their protests against the CCP.

This isn’t organic patriotism, though certainly many Chinese are patriotic. But it is intended to look like it. And the scale and scope of this covert political mobilization is striking. Embassies have been able to organize large pro-Beijing demonstrations in major cities all over the world for at least 15 years, and mainstream media coverage almost without exception portrays such events as evidence of organic grassroots support for Beijing—precisely the goal of United Front work.

A United Front policy which has become increasingly prominent in the past two decades is to encourage “huarencanzheng,” or Chinese participation in the politics of the countries they live in. Qiu Yuanping, the current director of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, which is under the direct oversight of the United Front Department, regularly encourages Chinese living in the United States and elsewhere to get involved in politics and to vote.

It’s a policy that by nature is tricky to discuss. In the United States, Chinese communities have traditionally been politically marginalized, and efforts to get more Chinese-Americans to vote and run for office are sorely needed. “Of course it is completely normal and to be encouraged that the ethnic Chinese communities in each country seek political representation,” the New Zealand scholar Brady writes in her report.

But the United Front efforts to encourage overseas Chinese to participate in politics are not “spontaneous and natural development,” writes Brady.

“This policy encourages overseas Chinese who are acceptable to the PRC government to become involved in politics in their host countries as candidates who, if elected, will be able to act to promote China’s interests abroad,” says Brady, “and encourages China’s allies to build relations with non-Chinese pro-CCP government foreign political figures, to offer donations to foreign political parties, and to mobilize public opinion via Chinese language social media; so as to promote the PRC’s economic and political agenda abroad.”

Here’s an example of what that can look like. Yang Chunlai, a Chinese engineer, came to the United States in 1990. He later became the president of the Association of Chinese Scientists and Engineers, a U.S.-based group founded in 1992. In his role as ACSE president, Yang traveled to China in 2007 to participate in a conference for overseas Chinese organizations hosted by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office.

At a speech he gave at the conference, Yang said that Beijing views overseas Chinese political participation in host countries as a means to serve China.

“China has gone through three stages regarding its approach to overseas Chinese making contributions to China,” said Yang. “The earliest stage was emphasizing that overseas scholars should return home to serve China. Later, we realized that serving China doesn’t necessarily require returning to China. Now, China is placing an emphasis on our development in foreign countries, paying close attention to whether or not we can enter local mainstream society and play an active role in the politics and debate of our host countries.”

Yang added, “Next year is a big election year in America; voting is hard logic. ACSE hopes to take advantage of this opportunity to further expand our influence on American mainstream society.”

Perhaps Yang’s name rings a bell. That’s because he was arrested in 2011, accused of stealing trade secrets in a scheme to set up an exchange in China. He pleaded guilty, was convicted in 2015, and sentenced to four years probation. In the reporting on his arrest, trial, and conviction, his participation in United Front-related activities in China was not mentioned.

RUSI VI/UVic Military Oral History Program - How to make an online donation

This recommendation on how to make a donation from our contact at UVic, Chrystal Phan, the Development Officer Faculty of Humanities & UVic Libraries,.

Online donations – because there are so many funds at UVic, we are only permitted to have a handful listed. The easiest way for RUSI members to donate will be to use this link to the history department’s giving page: <https://extrweb.uvic.ca/donation-forms/department-of-history> and then choose ‘other’ as their designation. In the ‘other’ field, they can enter “**RUSI-VI Military Oral History Endowment**”

From Our President

I trust that this newsletter finds you in good health, despite the increasingly adverse effect of forest fires, combatting which our military is proving assistance. As usual, our military becomes *the* dependable backstop and “go to” resource when a real *emergency* arises.

Although summer is normally an inactive period for RUSI, we were able to take advantage of one luncheon opportunity this month, for which Don Macnamara receives our thanks. We shall continue to respond to one-off opportunities and, since these normally surface with an individual member as did this one, if you are aware of the potential for an event likely of interest to members, please let a Board member know so that we can consider it.

RUSI-VI lunches start again in September. Scott Usborne has prepared a full schedule of speakers for the season, and we think the topics will be timely and of strong interest to members.

Enjoy the rest of summer and your Board hopes to see you in the fall.

Roger Love
President RUSI VI

LAW: CANADA'S SHIFTING STRATEGIC CIRCUMSTANCES

Published by CDA Institute on its Web Site [CDAI](#)

Jul 16, 2018

Author David M. Law

Notwithstanding its huge size and relatively small population, Canada has lived a charmed strategic existence through most its history as a statal (national) entity.

As every Canadian schoolchild should know, the country is the second biggest by territory and has the longest shoreline of all the world's states. In spite of this, Canada has not had to contend with a serious threat on its territory since the confederation decade of the 1860s.

There are several factors that explain the country's strategically exceptional situation.

First, and most obviously, Canada has long been blessed by a benign geopolitical environment. The country's only land border is with the United States, until 9/11 celebrated by both countries as an unarmed divide. The two North American states have enjoyed one of the most peaceful and productive bilateral relationships of any tandem in the international community in the modern age.

Beyond that, Canada has been sheltered by three of the world's greatest seas. Potential predators have had to contend with great distances and daunting physical obstacles to be able to challenge Canada militarily. Until very recently, the Arctic has only been passable with icebreakers.

Canada's geography has insulated it. The country has not had to deal with influxes of unregulated migration as have typically states in Africa, Asia and Europe. Nor has it had to think its way through the complexities of immigration from the south that have tended to dominate the U.S. political discourse in recent decades.

And third, Canada has embedded its foreign and security policy in a web of regional and international security institutions – NATO, NORAD, UN, OSCE – as well as many other bodies with an economic and commercial calling without a specific security role – OECD, WB, IMF, G7, G20, Nordic Council – but whose activities have been equally important for Canada's overall safety and well-being.

As a member of these organizations, Canada has been an active, and for the most part, an effective player on the international scene. In turn, this has effectively shored up its economic, political, social and strategic security. And Canada has been able to do so at a more than reasonable cost. This has freed resources for other ambitions.

ARCTIC REGION



The United States has also relied on this international network for much of its foreign policy-making around the globe. But in contradistinction to the U.S., Canada has harboured few of America's geostrategic responsibilities, let alone aspirations. As a state with only 0.5% of the global population and only some 2.5% of its GDP, this has made good sense – and for the most part, it has served Canadians well.

Canada's unique geographical and geopolitical situation has allowed successive governments to keep the country's defence spending low. It has recently risen to around 1.23% of GDP, still well below what NATO agreed in 2014 would be its target for the next decade. Canada is now set to increase its defence spending only to 1.4% by 2024-25.

Canada was not always at the back of the pack. For example, at the end of the Second World War, the country had the world's fourth largest air force and its fifth largest navy. In the Korean War of 1950-53, Canada fielded the third largest allied force overall. At these junctures, Canada's economy was, of course, significantly smaller than it is today.

Now, however, Canada is a poster-boy case of a country that has not taken its national security seriously. With the end of the Cold War, Canada significantly cut back on its defence spending. This was an understandable response to the sea change that occurred in the East-West relationship. Many of its NATO allies reacted similarly. But as the geostrategic environment has become increasingly more problematic, and there have been increasing signs of a possible return to large-scale inter-state conflict, Canada has been slow to reverse gears.

To an extent, this has been possible because of the comparatively much greater resources that its neighbour to the south has devoted to defence. The contrast is more than striking. As William Watson explained in a recent piece in the *National Post*, while Canada has one-ninth of the population of the U.S., its defence spending is one-fortieth of the American level.

Defence spending levels are anything but everything. As I argued in an earlier blog, the capacity that results from defence spending is the key issue. The United States has serially misused its huge military capacity on security challenges that would have better been addressed by non-military means or on prosecuting wars that did not have to be fought. While very lucrative for the American military-industrial complex, this has been poisonous for its democracy. The misuse of state resources abroad has been one of the reasons for Trump's autocratic rise.

All that said, the U.S.-Canada defence spending ratio is not a sustainable imbalance, no matter who is in power in Washington – nor for that matter in Ottawa.

The factors that have been responsible for Canada's charmed strategic situation – its sheltered geography, its benevolent relationship with its neighbour to the south, the web of international organizations that it has traditionally relied upon – are all now in flux. Canada's geopolitical environment is undergoing a paradigm shift. Its security elite, not to mention the population at large, have not begun to take this into account. It is high time that they did.

Editors Note: As members of RUSI VI, which is a member of the Conference of Defence Associations, you have access to the CDA Institutes web site - <https://cdainstitute.ca/>

China-Built Aircraft Carrier to Embark On 2nd Sea Trial

(Source: Global Times; posted July 06, 2018)



After an initial five-day builder's trials, China's home-built aircraft carrier returned to the Dalian Shipyard, in Northeast China's Liaoning Province, to complete outfitting work, and will now sail for further sea trials. (Chinese internet photo)

Outfitting work was completed on China's first domestically built aircraft carrier, Type 001A, on Thursday, making the ship ready for its second sea trial.

The carrier's first sea trial was from May 13 to 18. A military expert said this proves the first sea trial was successful, and that the process could be accelerated. After a five-day sea trial, the carrier returned on May 23 to the Dalian Shipyard, Northeast China's Liaoning Province, to finish its remaining outfitting work. A report from wenweipo.com said the carrier has been moved out from the dock and is ready for its second sea trial.

"The carrier's surface doesn't show any big changes, and the outfitting work is primarily for inspection and maintenance. After the first sea trial, the ship's instruments collected data and information, so its equipment must be adjusted based on the data," said Song Zhongping, a military expert and TV commentator. "The carrier can be delivered to the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy as soon as possible," Song added.

Although China already has one aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, in service, it doesn't mean the second one can skip steps during the sea trials, Song told the Global Times. "The Liaoning helps China gain experience in testing a huge warship like an aircraft carrier, so it can accelerate the progress for the next one, but progress has to be made step by step."

The first sea trial results for the ship, known as the Type 001A, have been successful, China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation (CSIC) Chairman Hu Wenming said on June 21, according to the company's official website.

The PLA used to lack air supremacy in the South China Sea and on the high seas, Song said, adding that the aircraft carrier could help overcome the shortcoming. The ship is China's second aircraft carrier after the Liaoning, and its construction began in 2013, People's Daily website people.cn reported.

Mali

“Canadian troops ready as ‘complex’ Mali peacekeeping mission gets underway” - Commander Col. Chris McKenna



By [Rahul Kalvapalle](#) National Online Journalist Global News August 1, 2018

The risk of terrorist attacks, ambushes and the scorching desert heat are just some of the challenges that Canadian troops face as they kick off their [peacekeeping](#) mission in [Mali](#), but the commander of Canada’s air task force says his troops are ready for what lies ahead.

Col. Chris McKenna will oversee the 250-strong air task force’s mission of conducting medical evacuations and transporting troops, equipment and supplies to assist the [United Nations](#) peacekeeping effort in the war-torn Western African nation.

On Tuesday, the Canadian contingent achieved “initial operating capability,” meaning they’ve officially replaced German forces in providing aeromedical evacuation services and other support over disputed territory.

“The aircraft are loaded with all the medical gear, all of my soldiers’ gear is inside of that and they sleep about 25 metres from the aircraft. That is our life for the next six to seven months,” McKenna told Global National.

“We’re ready to go as of tonight, absolutely.”

The Canadian troops will be tasked with coming to the aid of allied soldiers, UN peacekeepers as well as civilians, and McKenna says they're leaving no stone unturned in their efforts to be as ready as possible.

"The response time we're mandated to meet is a 30-minute launch in the day and a 60-minute launch at night, but we've been beating those by a good margin on every one of our four practice launches today," said McKenna.

"We essentially are flying a Canadian hospital emergency room right to the middle of the Sahara Desert, and that is really important to the person who really needs it at that time."



It's a mission that is fraught with dangers.

Over 160 UN peacekeepers have been killed in Mali in just five years; large swathes of the country are lawless and plagued by Al-Qaeda-linked terrorist groups who strike with deadly frequency.

On Tuesday, gunmen attacked a government convoy that was carrying election materials, killing four Malian soldiers. It was the latest in a series of attacks that have beset Mali's presidential elections, with authorities saying a fifth of all polling stations have suffered some form of disruption.

McKenna describes the preparation for possible encounters with militants as his biggest challenge in Mali.

"The bigger complexity for us is understanding all the various armed groups who might be either in the area of operations, or in and around a point-of-injury site," he said. "And so we take great care to make sure the intelligence is feeding us what we can expect on the ground, and we can make sure that that area's safe to land in and pick up injured soldiers and civilians."

There's also the challenge of protecting troops and their equipment from the unforgiving heat and unrelenting sandstorms.

“We’ve had very, very hot days here with humidexes over 50 degrees consistently. And we’ve had a lot of sand and very quickly-moving sandstorms and dust-storms that pop up,” said McKenna. “So we have to take great care of the equipment we’ve been given to make sure we get this capability going.”

But all in all, McKenna says his troops are prepared for what is Canada’s first large-scale UN peacekeeping mission in over a decade, and conscious of the responsibilities that come with donning the Blue Beret, recognized the world over as a symbol of international peacekeeping efforts.

“The team are really devoted to the mission that we are doing. It’s a good mission. It’s all about saving people and helping people, and we’re getting a lot out of it as professional aviators and soldiers,” he said. The mission is also a first for McKenna himself, in that while he previously served as a peacekeeper for NATO in the former Yugoslavia, this is his first time donning a Blue Beret.

“This is my first UN mission and yesterday my entire task force was standing on parade wearing blue berets, and there was a lot of pride. A lot of pride.”

— *With files from Ottawa bureau chief Mercedes Stephenson and Reuters*

Last Post

Sub Lt (retd) Sheila M. Davis (April 15, 1926 - August 10, 2018)

RUSI-VI SPEAKER'S SCHEDULE, 2018-2019

12 Sep, 2018- ***Canada's Mission in Mali: A Primer*** by Scott Osborne

⇒ **Place:** 5th (BC) Field Regt RCA Officers' Mess, Rm 312, Bay Street Armoury

⇒ **Time:** 1130 for 1200 Luncheon

⇒ **Cost:** \$25 (pay at the door)

10 Oct, 2018- ***India in Sri Lanka, 1987-1990: The Perils of 'Peacekeeping'*** by Dr. Chandar Sundaram

14 Nov, 2018- ***Viking Air: Projects Update*** by Dom Spragg

9 Jan, 2019- ***The Cinderella Campaign: 1st Canadian Army's Battles for the Channel Ports*** by Mark Zuelhke

13 Feb, 2019- ***Who Killed the AVRO Arrow?*** By Dr. Chris Gainor

13 Mar, 2019- ***Are We Strong, Secure, and Engaged? An Assessment of Canada's 2017 Defence Policy*** by BGen (Rtd) Don McNamara

10 Apr, 2019- ***RCMP E Division's Integrated National Security Enforcement Team (Counter-Terrorism)***- by Superintendent John Baranyi, or Inspector David Taboul, TBC

8 May, 2019- ***MARPAC Update: Canadian Submarine Operations on the West Coast*** by Speaker TBC

The views expressed by the authors of articles in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the Views of RUSI-VI.