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RUSI VI

*To promote national defence and security issues
through discussion and engagement*

**Newsletter of the Royal United Services Institute
of Vancouver Island**

The Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver Island is a member of the Conference of Defence Associations. The CDA is the oldest and most influential advocacy group in Canada's defence community, consisting of associations from all parts of the country.

The CDA expresses its ideas and opinions with a view to influencing government security and defence policy. It is a non-partisan, independent, and non-profit organization.



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President's Message

Welcome to Zoom Webinars!

As you have already seen, our next Zoom Webinar is on JTF-IMPACT with MGen St-Louis, for 2 December, 1 PM to 2:30 PM. I hope you can join us. I expect it to be both interesting and informative. This is our third Webinar and my experience is that they do not bring in great audience numbers. We have invited guests from CIC and NAC-VI as well as our membership. If you have friends who are interested in this topic (or by extension interest in RUSI-VI itself), please encourage them to register for this Webinar, there is no cost. MGen St-Louis came to us through the CAF Public Affairs Outreach program. If this goes well, we may get access to additional CAF speakers in the future.

In regards to COVID-19, we will not be holding our traditional Christmas party in December. Also, in spite of some optimism regarding COVID-19 vaccines, I am anticipating that RUSI-VI will not be able to return to live luncheons until as late as September, 2021. That means we will be confined to Zoom Webinars exclusively until then.

However, there is some good news in these difficult times. We are on a par with our success in collecting annual dues from this time last year. And we have still managed to draw in some new members. Two previous guest speakers, two past members, one new member and also one new Honourary member (Cdr (Ret'd) Peter Chance), for a total of six, have re-joined/joined RUSI-VI since stand up this September.

This is a reminder, for some of you, that your annual RUSI-VI dues, \$40.00 for single, or \$50.00 for a family membership, are now overdue. Prompt payment is appreciated! For those of you who have already paid your dues, thank you for your support! All dues are to be paid exclusively by cheque via snail mail. Please send to the following:

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Scott H. Usborne
President
Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver Island

China Surpassing Russia in Airpower

By Greg Waldron 9 November 2020 in FLIGHT GLOBAL

The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) UK has concluded that China is well on its way to eclipsing Russia in the field of combat aircraft.

In a recent report, the UK-based think tank contends that Russia and China are on different trajectories in combat aircraft development, with China taking a clear lead in areas such as sensors, datalinks, weapons, and low-observable technology. The single area where Russia retains an edge over China is in aircraft engines.

The report, authored by research fellow Justin Bronk, notes that the two countries largely rely on derivatives of the Sukhoi Su-27, that both have worked on low observable aircraft, and that both have increased multi-role capability.

Nonetheless, China is pulling ahead, with advanced types joining both the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) and People's Liberation Army Navy Air Force (PLANAF). "China has started to build a clear technical lead over Russia in most aspects of combat aircraft development," says RUSI. "Moreover, Russian industry is unlikely to be able to regain areas of competitive advantage once lost, due to deep structural industrial and budgetary disadvantages compared to the Chinese sector."

Among light fighters, RUSI contends that the Chengdu J-10 family is "significantly more efficient and flexible than the aging" RAC MiG-29/35 series. At the higher end, the Chengdu J-20 is the only deployed stealth fighter, apart from Lockheed Martin's F-35 and F-22.

"The J-20 family will be produced in the hundreds over the coming decade, constituting the foremost existing aerial threat to Western air superiority types," says RUSI.

Russia's Su-57, on the other hand, has yet to become a frontline system, and lacks "the basic design features required for a true [low observable] signature".

The report notes that Russia has struggled to field effective active electronically scanned array (AESA) radars, which offer pilots high detection ranges, but feature low probability of intercept/low probability of detection by adversaries.

As for China's version of the Su-27, the Shenyang J-11, China has done a great deal to modernise the platform, including the use of composite materials that improve the Chinese version's thrust-to-weight ratio. RUSI believes that the new J-11D version, equipped with an AESA radar, internal electronic warfare suite, and a superior weapons payload, will be superior to the most advanced iteration of the Su-27 family, the Su-35.

RUSI also regards the Chinese version of the Su-30, the J-16, as a major improvement.

"The J-16 features an AESA radar, increased use of composite materials for reduced weight, a fully digital 'glass' cockpit for both crew, compatibility with the full range of Chinese [precision-guided munitions] and a new targeting pod called YINGS-III which is roughly comparable to the US [Lockheed] Sniper pod," says RUSI.

"Following its entry to service in 2015, the J-16 is expected to replace [China's] Su-30MKK and

MK2 fleets over the coming decade in both PLAAF and eventually PLANAF service, and is currently China's most capable multirole and strike aircraft."

The report speculates that the 2020s could even see Russia importing Chinese sensor and missile technology.

"For this to occur, the Russian government would have to overcome considerable levels of distrust between Russia and China in military terms, as well as deep-seated Russian pride and attachment to their sovereign aerospace industry," says RUSI.

"However, the increasing superiority of Chinese radars, [air-to-air missiles] and targeting pods may prove sufficient motivation, especially in the face of a new generation of Western combat aircraft development programmes."

Making Magic in the Arctic: Exercise Arctic Edge

**Utility of small teams of our people working with allies
to develop solutions & stronger teamwork**

Posted on [November 10, 2020](#) by [Chris Thatcher](#) Skies Magazine

When Sgt Tim Blindback heard the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) was looking for volunteers to provide tactical datalink expertise to a U.S. Northern Command exercise in the Arctic in late February, he didn't hesitate. In fact, he even volunteered four colleagues to join him.

Arctic Edge is a biannual exercise led by Alaska Command, a subordinate command to USNORTHCOM headquartered at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. In previous iterations, Canadian aerospace controllers had travelled north to manage air traffic control and tactical assets such as fighter jets and tankers. On this occasion, with the Canadian Army's 4th Artillery Regiment (General Support) deploying its new Medium Range Radar (MRR) for the first time with a U.S. Marine Corps Air-Ground Task Force, planners needed tactical datalink specialists.

Blindback, a Joint Interface Control Officer with 21 Aerospace Control and Warning Squadron at 22 Wing North Bay, Ont., the Canadian Air Defence Sector for NORAD, and one of the Air Force's foremost authorities on Link networks, immediately recognized that communicating was going to be a challenge.

Though the Alaska NORAD Region (ANR) had communications infrastructure and command and control systems to support the exercise, there was no Link 16 network to connect the MRR in the field to the exercise command centre. However, though the radar troop and Marines would be dispersed and "in the boonies" during the exercise, they could receive a cellphone signal.



A CC-130J Hercules from 436 Squadron on the flight line at Fort Greely, Alaska, before a static line jump with U.S. paratroopers during Arctic Edge on Feb. 29, 2020. Cpl Jordan Fountain Photo

Blindback suggested sending a little-known RCAF spoke kit, so-called because of its hub and spoke architecture.

The magic box, as others quickly dubbed it, “allows you to get that communications infrastructure, no matter where you are in the world, as long as you have some basic rules,” he explained. “The box allows you to plug in a cell phone and as long as you have internet connectivity in any way, shape or form, you can get a good, secure connection back to home base and out into the world.”

The radar troop, based at 5th Canadian Division Support Base Gagetown, N.B., made a pitstop at Best Buy before heading north and bought a 4G modem puck and a sim card. When they plugged it into the spoke kit in the back of their LAV II Bison, “boom, we had connectivity,” said Blindback. “We were able to create a computer network and configured the system to pass Link 16 data over the computer network rather than over radio frequency.”

The significance of that became apparent as radios and other equipment used by various Marine, U.S. Army and National Guard units froze or otherwise experienced firmware failures in the frigid Arctic conditions. The spoke kit not only connected the MRR to the exercise command, it also provided the air picture to the Canadian and Alaskan regional NORAD command centres and the national chains of command, including Canadian Joint Operations Command in Ottawa.

“That was huge because we did not have that capability before,” said LCol Scott Marshall, commanding officer of the Canadian Detachment at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson and the commander of the Canadian national elements during the exercise. “[The Link and MRR teams] were the star of the show. They got to do a lot more than we expected, even with the grand scale of this exercise.”

For those used to readily available cellular networks, getting two systems to share data might not seem that remarkable. But “having it actually communicate with NORAD, because of the encryption and all the different computer systems and software languages, was a marvel,” said Lt Travis Fryxell, an artillery officer with the 4th Artillery Regiment (GS).

Their critical contribution of greater situational awareness of all air assets in the area was essential to the exercise.

No one had ever envisioned deploying the spoke kit – two heavy servers in a large Pelican case – in the back of an armoured vehicle, admitted Blindback. Though it was “overkill” for the purposes of Arctic Edge, it was a creative solution and an example of how to “make the best use of what you have at the time.



A member of 4th Artillery Regiment, General Support, preparing the Medium Range Radar for start-up during Ex. Arctic Edge in February 2020 at Fort Greely, Alaska. Cpl Jordan Fountain Photo

“It was never intended for that purpose. It was designed to support forward deployments in other countries, like standing up a headquarters,” he explained. “It was meant to serve every possible network need that you might require. We only wanted connectivity to one network. But we saw the opportunity and we happened to have one for use. It took a lot of work to get it into place, but it worked out really well.”

NICHE CAPABILITIES

One of the last exercises before COVID-19 restricted large-scale collective training, Arctic Edge is intended to improve Arctic readiness of both Alaska-based troops and supporting units from across the U.S. For the RCAF and other Canadian Armed Forces units, it’s an opportunity to practice the integration of what are often specific and, at times, unique capabilities into complex coalition operations.

In 2020, Arctic Edge also provided the overarching context for two other overlapping exercises, Arctic Eagle and ICEX. Though primarily an exercise for National Guard forces, Arctic Eagle included a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive scenario that involved a 10-soldier team from 39 Canadian Brigade Group. ICEX, a U.S. Navy submarine exercise on and under the Arctic ice, included supply support from 440 Transport Squadron in Yellowknife, N.W.T.

RCAF aircraft and crews were pivotal throughout Arctic Edge and ICEX. A CC-130J Hercules from 436 Transport Squadron provided troop transport and materiel and air drops, including a U.S. Army paratroop jump near Fort Greely, Alaska. Two CC-138 Twin Otters from 440 Squadron conducted medevac flights and transport of supplies and personnel into austere locations, including sea ice landings at Camp Seadragon on an ice floe about 240 kilometres from the Alaskan coast during ICEX.

“That far out on the ice, it is riskier for the big Hercs to land,” said Marshall of the U.S. Navy’s C-130J Hercules. “[For] the Twin Otter, it is easy in and out of there. They were really thrilled to get the support from 440 to do that.”

“The U.S. Navy is picking up some Twin Otters, so they had a pilot observing during most of ICEX to see how 440 pilots conduct operations and learn from the subject matter experts on Arctic ops with skis and Twin Otters,” he added.

Though a fighter jet scenario was not part of Arctic Edge this year, two CF-188s became part of ICEX, along with U.S. F-22 Raptors and a KC-135 Stratotanker and E-3 Sentry aircraft, when two Russian Tu-142 maritime reconnaissance planes entered the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone on March 9, likely to monitor Seawolf-class fast-attack and Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarines taking part in the exercise.

“The units that were participating all had niche capabilities that the Americans didn’t,” said Marshall, who commands a team of over 30 Canadians embedded with U.S. units, including the 176th Air Defense Squadron, the 962nd Airborne Air Control Squadron, and the 611th Air Operations Center. “These exercises not only helped to highlight what the RCAF and the Canadian Army can do, but ... they [allowed us] to operate with non-traditional American NORAD units. A lot of [the Americans] were from outside of Alaska, so it was an eye-opener for them.



Sgt Alexandre Tasse, a loadmaster from 436 Squadron, on the CC-130J Hercules during Ex. Arctic Edge. Cpl Jordan Fountain Photo

“Our preparedness for operating in these conditions is much higher and at a steady state because of where we live and what we do in day-to-day operations,” he noted. “Our Hercs are consistently working in the Arctic ... and, of course, our Twin Otters just live there.”

VALIDATING SUB-ARCTIC OPS

It was the spoke kit and medium range radar, however, that garnered much of the high-level attention. The MRR is a ground-breaking capability for the Army, bringing together what were previously separate air defence and surveillance target acquisition in one platform. Acquired in 2018, it was initially intended to detect and locate sources of indirect fire such as rocket propelled grenades, mortars, rockets and other munitions that were fired at bases in Afghanistan. But in air defence mode, it can identify friend or foe targets such as aircraft at great distance.

The 4th Artillery Regiment troop provided both capabilities to the Marines during the exercise. They were even able to set up and connect two MRRs, a primary and secondary radar, at a staging area near Fort Greely, and validate and consolidate data that was then passed up to NORAD. “That was a first for us,” said Fryxell.



Members of 4th Artillery Regiment, General Support, operating the Medium Range Radar from their LAV II Bison on Feb. 26, 2020. Cpl Jordan Fountain Photo

“I don’t think [the marines] believed we would be as important in their planning process as we were,” he added. “When we first showed up, they didn’t really have an idea of how they would fit us in. They didn’t know the capability, which a lot of people don’t. But this was a great opportunity for our guys to work with them and share that information.”

The Regiment itself is still learning what the MRR can do, he noted, and Arctic Edge helped validate Arctic operations, tactical datalink (TDL) connectivity in extreme environments, and the troop’s winter warfare skills.

“There were a lot of lessons learned that we can take away from this. The single thing was validation that this system can operate in sub-Arctic conditions. That means we could potentially support the radars that cover our defence through NORAD, if one of the Air Force radars goes down,” he said.

For Blindback’s 22 Wing team, which was co-located with the exercise headquarters and served as the bridge to the MRR troop in the field, being able to provide the HQ staff with a complete air picture, including blue force tracking, and facilitate text messaging and basic chat over a secure connection, was gratifying.



A CC-138 Twin Otter being offloaded at a camp on the Arctic sea ice off of Alaska's North Slope coast on March 3, 2020. Cpl Jordan Fountain Photo

"The Americans were ecstatic. They were able to look at the Ex staff and say, 'We have active TDLs in the field.' That was something they weren't able to accomplish domestically because of those problems with the equipment failures," he said. "It gave the Ex the only TDL component that it would have had otherwise, and it proved Canada can show up and get stuff done."

That the spoke kit was even in Alaska was due in no small measure to Blindback's persistence. When he first proposed deploying it, few in the RCAF or Army had ever heard of it. Five weeks and numerous pages of emails later, he created enough awareness and understanding to gain approval.

With the spoke kit now proven in a complex exercise, one goal is to "attack" the paperwork so that the next deployment will be easier and faster. Another is to explore what might be possible with a smaller and less power-hungry version.

"The Army now has some good ideas they can pursue to get better connectivity out in the field," he said. "And I can guarantee the Air Force is going to want something smaller, too. The current spoke kit is great for standing up headquarters, not great for standing up tactical units with a small footprint and low power capabilities."

Exactly what the Canadian contribution will be for Arctic Edge and affiliated exercises in 2022 remains to be seen, but with Gen Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, declaring the Arctic event will be a "directed exercise for all of the Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force, I suspect the scale will increase dramatically," said Marshall.

China Extends Reach in the Caribbean, Unsettling the U.S.

The region has strategic importance as a hub for logistics, banking and commerce. It is also very close to the United States.



Shipments from China of medical equipment to combat the coronavirus arriving in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, this spring. China has strengthened ties overseas through such donations in what has come to be called “mask diplomacy.” Credit...Pierre Michel Jean/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

By Kirk Semple writing in The New York Times Nov. 8, 2020

MEXICO CITY — [China](#) has offered Jamaica loans and expertise to build miles of new highways. Throughout the Caribbean, it has donated security equipment to military and police forces, and built a network of Chinese cultural centers. And it has dispatched large shipments of test kits, masks and ventilators to help governments respond to the pandemic.

The initiatives are part of a quiet but assertive push by China in recent years to expand its footprint and influence in the region through government grants and loans, investments by Chinese companies, and diplomatic, cultural and security efforts.

But while governments in the region have welcomed Beijing’s interest, the Trump administration has viewed China’s growing presence — and its potential to challenge Washington’s influence in the region — with concern and suspicion.

The Caribbean markets are generally small, and most of the nations there lack the sizable reserves of minerals and other raw materials that often draw Chinese attention. But the region has strategic importance as a hub for logistics, banking and commerce, analyst say, and could have great security value in a military conflict because of its proximity to the United States.

“There are a lot of reinforcing reasons that go beyond balance sheets,” said R. Evan Ellis, research professor of Latin American studies at the U.S. Army War College’s Strategic Studies Institute. “China understands intuitively the strategic importance of that space.”



Prime Minister Andrew Holness of Jamaica, right, meeting with China’s premier, Li Keqiang, in Beijing last year. Jamaica has received more Chinese government loans than any other Caribbean island nation. Credit...Florence Lo/Reuters

China’s efforts in the region are part of its global strategy to forge deep economic ties and strong diplomatic relationships around the world, in part through the building of major infrastructure projects under its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative.

A crucial motivation for China’s Caribbean strategy also is winning over the remaining nations that officially recognize Taiwan instead of China, most of which are in the Caribbean and Latin America, said

Richard L. Bernal, a professor at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica and former Jamaican ambassador to the United States.

China considers Taiwan to be part of its territory and has long sought to reduce the number of countries that recognize it. But recently Taiwan's international stature has grown with its aggressive response to the coronavirus pandemic.

"China's objective is to gradually eliminate the recognition of Taiwan," Mr. Bernal said.

China's growing interest has come as much-needed help for Caribbean nations that have serious infrastructure needs but whose status as middle-income countries complicates their access to financing for development.

Low-interest loans by the Chinese government totaling more than \$6 billion over 15 years have financed major infrastructure projects and other initiatives throughout the Caribbean, according to the Inter-American Dialogue, a research organization based in Washington. The total climbs by \$62 billion with the addition of assistance to Venezuela, much of it given in return for long-term oil supplies.

During the same period, Chinese firms have invested in ports and maritime logistics, mining and oil concerns, the sugar and timber industries, tourist resorts and technology projects. Between 2002 and 2019, trade between China and the Caribbean rose eightfold, said Mr. Ellis, the professor at the U.S. Army War College.

China's global push for business and allies has generated criticism, particularly in the United States and Western Europe, which have called the Belt and Road Initiative predatory. In 2018, Sri Lanka, unable to repay Chinese loans, surrendered its major port to China.

But analysts who closely follow Chinese activity in the Caribbean say that while there is some concern about the sustainability of some of the debt assumed by regional governments, they have seen no evidence of a debt trap as in the case of the Sri Lankan port.

"The loans are not only economic business but also a way of building good will," said Mr. Bernal, the professor at the University of the West Indies.



A floating dock in Havana for repairing Panamax-type ships, produced in China.

Credit Alexandre Meneghini/Reuters

Jamaica, which has emerged as an anchor of Chinese activity in the Caribbean, has received more Chinese government loans than any other Caribbean island nation, according to the Inter-American Dialogue, which closely tracks Chinese government financing in the region.

Over the past 15 years, Beijing has lent Jamaica some \$2.1 billion for building roads, bridges, a convention center and housing, according to the group. Grants have financed a children's hospital, schools and an office building for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, among other projects, according to the Planning Institute of Jamaica.

And direct investments from Chinese firms in Jamaica poured more than \$3 billion into projects like bauxite mining and sugar production, Chinese business leaders said, according to local news reports.

Last November, the Jamaican government announced that it would stop negotiating new loans from China as part of its effort to reduce debt quickly, but would continue to cooperate with the Chinese on major infrastructure projects through joint venture and public-private partnerships, among other arrangements.

But Jamaican officials say outstanding Chinese loans are not putting an extraordinary burden on the country: They amount to only about 4 percent of Jamaica's total loan portfolio and are scheduled to be repaid within a decade.

China has also widened its influence in the Caribbean through security cooperation, including the donation of equipment to military and police forces, and cultural outreach programs, like the expansion of its network of Confucius Institutes. These institutes provide language instruction and cultural programming but have been accused of disseminating Chinese government propaganda.

The pandemic allowed China to strengthen these relationships further by donating or selling personal protective equipment, in what has come to be called “mask diplomacy.” The Chinese foreign minister, Wang Yi, pledged in July that China would extend \$1 billion in loans for vaccines to Latin American and Caribbean countries.



China’s ambassador to Cuba, Chen Xi, left, and Cuba’s vice minister of health, Luis Fernando Navarro, in April signing for a delivery of donated health supplies from China to fight the coronavirus. Credit... Pool photo by Joaquin Hernandez

Even as it has increased its presence in the region, China has avoided directly challenging the United States in the Caribbean through rhetoric or military and political initiatives, Mr. Ellis said.

Still, China’s rise in the Caribbean pushed the Trump administration to forcefully promote its own development programs. These include “Growth in the Americas,” an investment initiative begun last year that many analysts viewed as a direct response to China’s diplomatic and trade efforts in the Caribbean and Latin America.

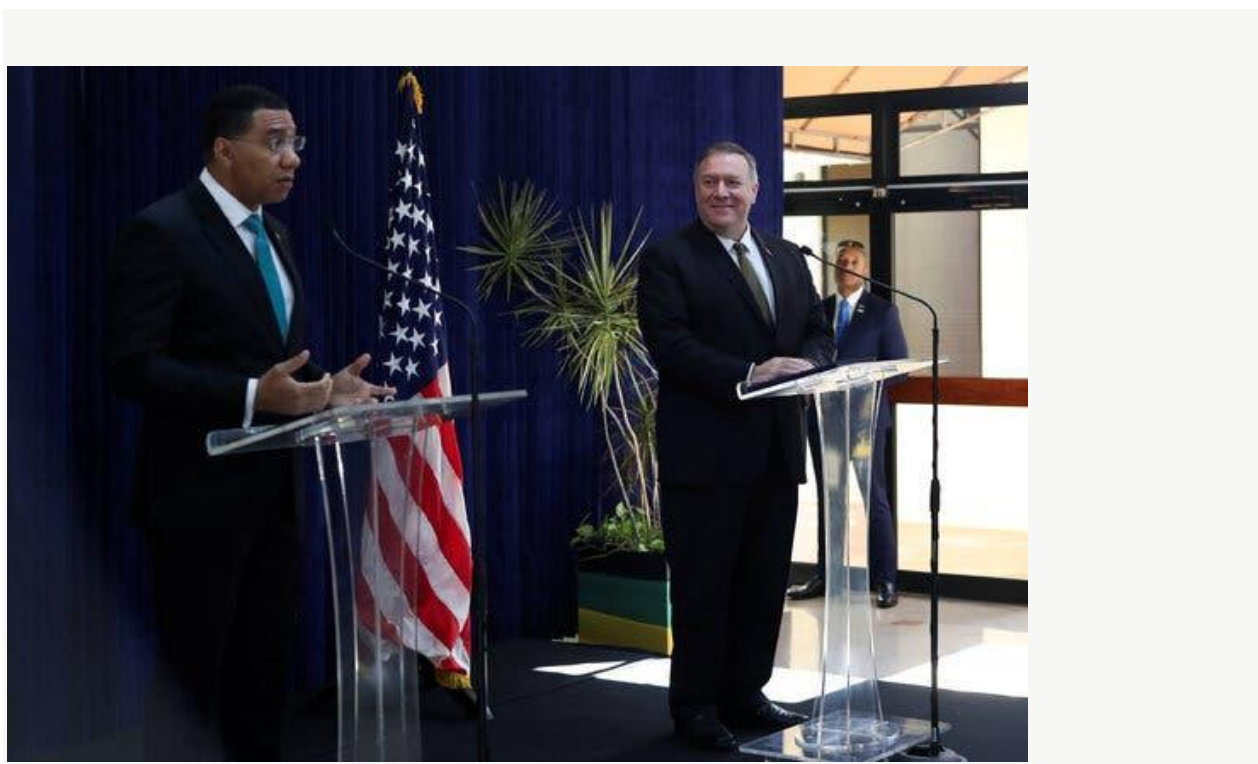
And in October, a Trump administration delegation visited Suriname, Guyana, Jamaica, Haiti and the Dominican Republic to tout American private sector investment.

The United States has also stepped up warnings to allies in the region about the risks of doing business with Beijing, underscoring what it says are potential hazards ranging from shoddy construction to predatory loans and espionage.

In recent weeks, the American ambassador to Jamaica, Donald Tapia, has cautioned that country against installing fifth-generation mobile networks made by Huawei and ZTE, two Chinese firms, warning [in a Twitter post](#) that “Huawei has a history of spying, stealing, and supporting authoritarian regimes.”

Last November, Mr. Tapia, [in an interview](#) with the Jamaica Gleaner, called China “a dragon with two heads,” the newspaper reported.

During a visit to Jamaica in January, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said it was “tempting to accept easy money from places like China.”



Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, right, meeting with Prime Minister Andrew Holness of Jamaica during a visit to Kingston in January. Credit...Gilbert Bellamy/Reuters

“But what good is it if it feeds corruption and undermines your rule of law?” he asked. “What good are those investments if in fact they ruin your environment and don’t create jobs for your people?”

The Chinese Embassy in Kingston, [in a statement](#) responding to Mr. Pompeo’s remarks, said it had deepened its involvement with Caribbean states “on the basis of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit.” And it accused the United States of picking fights.

“It seems that some U.S. politicians cannot go anywhere without attacking China, tarnishing China’s reputation, starting fires and fanning the flames and sowing discords,” the Chinese Embassy said. “They

can go on talking the talk if they so wish, but we will continue walking the walk. The world will tell plainly who is stirring up trouble and who is trying to make a difference.”

The deepening competition between the two superpowers has put Caribbean nations in an awkward position, and they do not want to be forced to pick sides, said Pepe Zhang, an associate director at the Atlantic Council’s Adrienne Arsht Latin America Center.

“They want to be able to work with both the United States and China in areas that make sense,” he said. “And I think that’s something that will be even more true now that the region is going through a very difficult economic recession.”

Russia and the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War

By [Murad Muradov](#), Geopolitical Monitor **BACKGROUNDERS - November 8, 2020**



In order to assess the role of Russia in the current hot phase of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict objectively and comprehensively, it is necessary to go into the recent past and understand how this role had been perceived before the escalation. It must be admitted that for a long time, stereotypical and simplified views of what Moscow wants and what it can do in this most complex knot of contradictions in the whole post-Soviet space had been dominating both in Azerbaijan and Armenia. Thus, in Baku they would love to repeat a laconic thesis: “Keys from Karabakh are kept in Moscow”, implying to Russia’s command of unsurmountable leverage in the region and her unlimited opportunities for manipulating Armenia, which used to be perceived merely as a Russian stronghold. This conviction entailed two tacitly shared points of view: first, that Azerbaijan would hardly be able to resume fighting as long as Russia retains the status of a global power, and secondly, that Moscow may, if it wants so, force Yerevan to accept compromises that would suit Baku. In this framework, Baku’s primary goal was to conduct such a foreign policy that could

instill willingness to do so in Kremlin. The short but spectacular counteroffensive in the 4-day war of 2016 must have most probably been contemplated as an instrument of forcing the rival to realize the instability of the status quo and trigger Moscow to actively push Armenia to compromises. However, these expectations, despite of a certain rhetoric change in Yerevan in 2016-17, proved futile.

The road to war in Nagorno-Karabakh

On the other side of the conflict, the prolonged existence of the status quo obtained by force (or, as Vladimir Kazimirov, the Russian diplomat mediating in the 1994 negotiations, put it, “voting with bullets”) which more than suited the Armenian side, did a poor service. Yerevan felt completely confident that its tight relationship with Russia, sealed by the membership in the CSTO military union and the 102nd Russian military base located in the city of Gyumri in Armenia, offered a solid guarantee against Baku’s willingness to conduct a large-scale military operation. Gradual waning of the Western attention to the South Caucasus only confirmed Armenia’s unwillingness to discuss the consensual conflict resolution in earnest.

On the other hand, the international situation has undergone a number of dramatic shifts since 2016. Russia and Turkey, which stood one step from a full-scale conflict with each other back then, started a quick rapprochement and turned into so-called “bitter friends,” who retain a number of contradictions on various issues but prefer to find mutual compromises. The gradual deepening of Russia’s conflict with the West, along with numerous frictions President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has had with his Western allies, have strongly contributed to this process. At the same time, the Russians’ growing weariness from the great-power adventurism, which still enjoyed certain popularity in 2015-2016, pushed Kremlin to pursue a more reserved foreign policy and restrict its geopolitical ambitions. However, it was the policy of the young democrat Nikol Pashinyan who came to power on the wave of the “velvet revolution” of 2018 which became the major trigger of change for Azerbaijan.

First of all, Pashinyan took a pro-Western foreign policy course, having brought into power a number of anti-Russian cadres and, to Moscow’s particular discontent, persecuted some of Moscow’s prominent friends in Armenia, including the former President, an informal leader of the “Karabakh clan” Robert Kocharyan and the former Secretary General of the CSTO, Yuri Khachaturov. Secondly, he started to pursue a very imprudent policy on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, at first gaining Baku’s favor with his promises of a new politics, substantial negotiations and agreement on a number of symbolically important measures, and then making a spectacular U-turn, taking openly provocative steps which even the winners of the First Karabakh war wouldn’t dare to do while in power. Pashinyan’s categorical statement made in 2019- “Karabakh is Armenia, period,” the announcement by Defense Minister Tonoyan of a new military doctrine called “New war-new territories,” which left no space for concessions, and the military escalation in July 2020 along the uncontested swath of the border, when Yerevan did not hide its intention to capture some new positions from Azerbaijan, have shown: a fragile balance of power in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict no longer holds, and the peace process in its old format has been rendered meaningless. All these circumstances have made the new phase of a full-scale war almost inevitable.

So, which position has Moscow taken in the current conflict? Since the early days, Russia made clear its unwillingness to interfere and get involved into the conflict on the side of its CSTO ally Armenia, stating that the fighting takes place in the recognized territory of Azerbaijan. Instead, Russia has accelerated its diplomatic activities and demonstrated its strong intention not to let the negotiation process be conducted by other powers. The first round of negotiations between the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia was mediated by Russian MFA Sergey Lavrov in Moscow on 9-10 October and was concluded with a preliminary agreement on humanitarian ceasefire. However, this agreement, along with two later ceasefires, proved to be absolutely inefficient and was violated just an hour after its entry into force. Most probably, Russia perceives its current diplomatic efforts rather as a declaration of its key role in the region

than real work on peace enforcement and, contrary to a popular opinion, understands that the situation must be first of all made clear on the battlefield before diplomacy can be efficient.

On the other hand, since the first days of the conflict Moscow has demonstrated certain concern about the de-facto formed military union of Azerbaijan and Turkey and the latter's increasing role. Since the beginning of the war, the Russian leadership has been maintaining coordination with their Turkish counterparts hardly less tight than with the direct parties, thus emphasizing that Ankara must count with Moscow while actively supporting of Azerbaijan. Concerns raised in the expert and establishment circles, and once by Head of Foreign Intelligence Service S. Naryshkin, about the participation of Turkish-hired "jihadis" or other mercenaries from Syria are primarily aimed at warning Ankara against assuming a too active role in South Caucasus. At the same time, some pro-Armenian politicians' statements about a possibility of an "anti-terrorist operation" by Russia in Nagorno-Karabakh look like baseless wishful thinking. President Vladimir Putin's speech at the Valdai Forum, and the latest response by the Russian MFA to the Armenian Prime Minister's letter of request suggest that Moscow does not want to interfere into the conflict unless it spreads into the territory of Armenia or there is a threat of a full-fledged humanitarian catastrophe for the Karabakh Armenians.

Moscow's view of Nagorno-Karabakh

So how should we understand the dynamics of Russia's position on this conflict, unprecedented in terms of intensity of fighting, and what shall we expect from it in the nearest future? Moscow's approach to the problem and her current behavior depend on several factors we are going to analyze here.

Firstly- however surprising should it be for many in Yerevan- current relationships with Azerbaijan are important for Russia in their own right and do not constitute a continuation of the Soviet "elder brother" syndrome (though it sometimes expresses itself, too). Moscow finds it very important that Azerbaijan, while being a GUAM member state and enjoying a close partnership with Turkey and a number of Western countries, did not follow in the footsteps of Georgia, choosing an unambiguously Western path. The famous "multivector policy" reflects, in the first place, Baku's unwillingness to become a satellite for any of its partners, including even brotherly Turkey, and readiness to fight for its vital interests often demonstrated by President Ilham Aliyev. Along with the diplomatic and willfully respecting tone Azerbaijan has always preserved towards Russia, these realities instilled in the Kremlin a certain trust towards the Azerbaijani government. Of course, one should not underestimate the fact that Aliyev is a Moscow-educated man capable of speaking with Russian elites in the language they understand, which plays a significant role in the Russian policy in her "near abroad."

On the other hand, one of the most salient and often underestimated factors for Moscow in her current attitude towards Azerbaijan is the treaty on the status of the Caspian Sea, signed in 2018. This treaty, which excluded the possibility of the military presence of third states in the Caspian, guaranteed Russia's "backyard" from potentially hostile forces wielding threats to destabilize the most fragile Russian region- Northern Caucasus. Azerbaijan is similarly important for the opportunities it provides for exerting political and economic influence on Iran- it is enough to remember the "North-South" transport corridor project which is supposed to improve Russian connections with Iran and the whole Middle Eastern region, where Moscow desperately tries to remain an influential actor.

Taking all these factors into account, Russia understands very well that the strategic and economic harm from spoiling relations with Azerbaijan, unavoidable in case of her direct support to Armenia, could not be compensated by the closest possible union with Yerevan.

Another key factor which determines Russian approach is Moscow's complex and controversial ties with Turkey. Most importantly, despite lasting contradictions and the activity of a big anti-Turkish lobby in

Russia, the Kremlin values partnership with Erdoğan for his conduct of foreign policy, ostentatiously independent from the West, and willingness to discuss many issues of regional importance directly with Russia, without involving Western interests. Putin's statement made at the Valdai forum that he feels much at ease working with Erdoğan, matters a lot as such considerations are often decisive in personalist regimes of the Russian kind.

However, along with them there are a number of strategic interests pushing Moscow towards Ankara and discouraging from spoiling ties with her over Karabakh. As the last years' events have shown, Erdoğan's ostensibly independent and unpredictable foreign policy has not made the NATO leadership alienate it, despite many expectations and efforts of some member states, such as France. During his recent visit to Ankara, NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg confirmed that Turkey remains an important ally and the key member of the Organization. Russia knows that any quarrel with Ankara would only push it closer to the West within the NATO framework, and hardly would like such a scenario to occur. US presidential elections matter as well: Moscow expects that in case of Biden's probable win the White House will take a harder stance on Turkey, which could inspire Erdoğan for a closer rapprochement with Moscow: the latter would not like to deprive herself of such a historic chance.

Nevertheless, some statements and actions of Russia (primarily its strike on the Syrian fighters' camp in Turkish-controlled Idlib) delineated her red lines regarding Turkish policy in the post-Soviet countries. In Nagorno-Karabakh these are mostly any territorial threats directed at Armenia, as well as attempts to shift the regional balance of power too radically. But it may well be that the real irritating factor for Russia has not been Karabakh but rather the deepening of Turkey's military and strategic partnership with Ukraine, including the purchases of Turkish drones which have gained an excellent reputation in Karabakh, and some of its statements on Crimea. Moscow should be concerned that the Ukrainian leadership may take inspiration from the Azerbaijani experience and dare to conduct a similar operation on its own occupied territories. Hence, it is not quite clear that Russian dissatisfaction is caused by Turkey's role in Karabakh- it had been well known in advance anyway, while rebukes against Ankara could well be mirrored by legitimate comparisons of her help to Baku with support Russia has been lending to the Assad government since 2015.

Apart from these factors, many analysts since the beginning of the fighting have claimed that the major reasons for Russia's neutrality was her discontent about the Pashinyan government's policies, its allegedly anti-Russian course and defiant neglect of Moscow's interests. That's why President Aliyev in his interviews to Russian information agencies emphasized Pashinyan's links with the Soros Fund, which in Russia has a status of a symbol of hostile Western encroachment. However, though Pashinyan indeed took a number of bold steps regarding Russia, compared to his predecessors, on the whole he has remained, particularly since last Autumn, within the framework of strategic partnership with Russia and has recently made a number of public statements about the priority attached to this partnership for securing Armenia's vital interests. Without doubt, Putin has certain distrust towards Pashinyan and must have been irritated by some of his decisions, but hardly has the motivation of "punishing" the untoward leader played a decisive role for Kremlin.

It is worth mentioning that several days ago, the planned trip of Armenia's former president Kocharyan, considered Putin's personal friend, to Moscow was cancelled at the last moment officially due to his positive coronavirus test. Many experts suggested that the cancellation actually had to do with Moscow's unwillingness to promise Armenia tangible support over Nagorno-Karabakh, and the subsequent statement of the first president Ter-Petrosyan hinted at this reality. Armenia's problem is that it had likely overestimated its weight in Russian politics and thus refused to genuinely engage in resolution plans, including the so-called "Lavrov plan" actively promoted in the aftermath of the April 2016 events, in the belief that these offers were made just to create an illusion of negotiations and that in case of a real war Moscow would support her anyway.

Together with these individual considerations, Russia's current attitude to Nagorno-Karabakh must be also understood within the general logic of contemporary Russian foreign policy. This logic primarily consists of a deliberate refusal from pursuing a long-term strategy in favor of constant tactical shifts which mix aggressive steps with retaliatory ones in order to achieve frequent short-term successes. This unusual foreign policy is deeply connected with the essence of the Russian regime, which, particularly after 2014, links the preservation of a tolerably high level of domestic support with cherishing the image of a great power and successfully defending its interests around the world. Famous political scientist Gleb Pavlovskiy has called the Russian governing elite "survival experts," in whose list of priorities sustaining reputation comes before genuine pursuit of global ambitions. Growing global volatility, when situational alliances frequently change one another, must have only reassured Kremlin in this vision of the world. Moreover, after a relative failure in Donbass and turning of the "Novorossiia" project into Moscow's geopolitical burden, unwillingness to get too deeply engaged into hot conflicts became a distinct feature of Russian foreign policy which now in a way parallels U.S. approach of the Obama administration- "not to get into stupid shit."

The example of French President Macron, who after a couple of ambitious statements over Karabakh had to back down due to his obvious inability to exert influence over the conflict on the ground, thus only harming his reputation, must have served as another warning for Moscow that it is better not to assume responsibilities which are hard to fulfill. So, in the recent years Kremlin quite often takes a "wait-and-see" approach to global affairs and prefers bandwagoning, which in the current situation means strengthening partnership with Baku. Russian foreign policy also prioritizes pragmatic partners who speak the language of power and bilateral agreements, to the vague statements of common values and multilateral responsibilities. That's why current rhetoric of Armenia, based on "duties of an ally" and civilizational affinity could have hardly evoked much sympathy in Moscow. Many outside observers get misled by a certain predominance of pro-Armenian figures among Russian politicians and experts over pro-Azerbaijani ones and draw conclusions about a respective foreign policy orientation. These conclusions do not take into account the fact that in terms of its impact on foreign policy decisions, lobbyism in Russia cannot be compared to the West, particularly the United States. They are rather determined by quite a narrow circle of people in the Kremlin who act upon their own considerations rather than the influence of outside powers.

Finally, the issue of Russian arms export to Armenia, continuing throughout the whole period of fighting, must be thrown light on. Speaking about it in some of his interviews, President Aliyev hinted that only this arms flow can explain the fact that the supplies of the Armenian side have not completely dried despite its gigantic losses. The maps show the rapidly increased frequency of flights from some Russian cities, primarily Rostov-on-Don, to Yerevan. This issue probably the most delicate one between the two countries right now and has provoked certain fears in Baku of a direct military intervention. But here, some things must be noted.

First of all, Armenia remains Russia's military ally under the CSTO umbrella, so Moscow will hardly want Yerevan to suffer a too bad defeat- it could both deprive Russia of leverage in Armenia after the conflict is over and harm her reputation in the other partners' eyes. Russia would like to show to the both parties that it still plays the key role in the region and Baku cannot rely exclusively on itself and Turkey for the final solution of the conflict. Secondly, there is no detailed public information about the models and quality of weapons currently exported to Armenia. Yerevan's gap from Baku in terms of technical and strategic preparedness in the current war is so huge that relentless supplies of small arms and artillery shells may only delay the inevitable, but not reverse the course of the fighting in the situation when the skies are almost fully controlled by the Azerbaijani army whose precise strikes destroy the rival's air defense systems, heavy weaponry and mass of fighters. And thirdly, there is such an issue as allied inertia which is typical for long-term partner relations. Its most illustrative example can be found in the US-Israeli

relations during the Obama presidency when, in spite of a profound political cooling and the White House's discontent with Netanyahu's "hawkish" policies, military support provided by U.S. reached its highest level in history. Such modes of cooperation react very slowly to changing political environment and depends on the extant procedures and executive interests. Hence, arms supplies must not be interpreted as a signal of Moscow's military intentions.

Azerbaijan-Armenia War is Over, but Most of the World Didn't Know it had Started

Fortune favours the bold, but it's easier to be bold when you have total air superiority and massive firepower on the ground

[Gwynne Dyer](#)

Hamilton Spectator November 2, 2020

The month-old war between Azerbaijan and Armenia is so low on everybody else's list of concerns that when Azerbaijan won the war last month, hardly anybody in the media elsewhere even noticed.

Shortly after 8 a.m. local time on a Monday, Azeri troops gained control of the road through the Lachin Pass. That is the sole land route between Armenia proper and Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian enclave inside the borders of Azerbaijan that the whole war is about.

Until Monday the Lachin road was crowded with Armenian refugees fleeing west to safety and Armenian troops and military supplies heading east to the war. Apart from one or two big strikes by Israeli-made LORA quasi-ballistic missiles (hypersonic, 400-km. range, GPS and television terminal guidance), the road was fairly safe.

But now there are Azerbaijani armoured vehicles across the Lachin road, and all of Nagorno-Karabakh is cut off: no more reinforcements, and more than half the Armenian civilian population of 146,000 people still there, trapped under constant shellfire and drone attacks. At least 2,000 people, most of them Armenians, have been killed in the fighting.

The outcome of the war was inevitable once it became clear that Russia was not going to intervene militarily to help Armenia, despite the fact that both countries are members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Azerbaijan is clearly the aggressor in this round of fighting, but it is a CSTO member too, so Russia had to make a choice.

Azerbaijan has three times Armenia's population and a great deal of oil, and Armenia is of no great strategic value, so Russia restricted itself to mediating futile ceasefires. The Azeris signed each time, but they knew they were winning and they never stopped their advance.

The most recent (third) ceasefire was actually negotiated with the help of the United States, and was supposed to come into effect at 8 a.m. on Monday, but the Azeris broke that one, too. As usual, they blamed the Armenians for having broken it within five minutes of its coming into effect (that is, at 8:05 a.m.) — but they tweeted their protest at 5 a.m., which rather undermined its plausibility.

The Azeris did not commit to an all-out offensive until about 10 days ago, confining themselves to probing attacks and random shelling until they were certain that the Russians would stay out. Then they sent an armoured column west along the Iranian border through territory that had been emptied of its Azeri inhabitants in the 1994 war.

The Armenians, outnumbered, overstretched and outgunned, did what they could, but by Oct. 22 the Azeris had reached the Hakari river valley. There they turned right and headed north up the valley — and on the 26th they took Lachin. End of game.

It was a move that they would never have risked against a more mobile and better equipped enemy. The Hakari runs through the narrow strip of territory that separates Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenia proper, so they had Armenian-held territory on both sides of them, and a 100-km supply line behind them that was overlooked by Armenian troops on the right-hand side all the way.

Fortune favours the bold, but it's easier to be bold when you have total air superiority — Armenia has nothing to match Azerbaijan's Turkish-built drones and Israeli-supplied missiles — and massive firepower on the ground. So now Azerbaijan holds the Lachin Pass, and all that remains is for Armenia to negotiate the return of Nagorno-Karabakh to its legal Azeri rulers (probably minus its Armenian residents).

That will be very painful for Armenians after a quarter-century of holding the territory, but they have no way of taking it back. They were bound to lose it in the end unless they could more or less match Azerbaijan's military spending, and they couldn't; the Azeri military budget was at least five times bigger, maybe more.

Like the Balkan wars of the early 20th century, nobody is in the right in the various wars that have been waged in the Caucasus since the old Soviet Union collapsed. The ethnic groups were already numerous and hopelessly intertwined, and Soviet policy deliberately made the situation even more complex.

The Armenians drove over half a million Azeris out of the territory of Nagorno- Karabakh and large adjacent entirely Azeri provinces in the 1992-94 war. Now the Azeri refugees will go home and 150,000 Armenians will have to seek new homes in Armenia proper. None of it is fair, but that's how it still works in much of the world.

Gwynne Dyer's new book is "Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy (and Work)."

Azerbaijan's Drones Owned the Battlefield in Nagorno-Karabakh — and Showed Future of Warfare

By **Robyn Dixon**

November 11, 2020 THE WASHINGTON POST

MOSCOW — The drone's-eye view over Nagorno-Karabakh defined much of the six-week war in the mountainous enclave within Azerbaijan: The video first showed soldiers below in trenches, then came blasts and smoke, then nothing.

Drone strikes — targeting Armenian and Karabakh soldiers and destroying tanks, artillery and air defense systems — provided a huge advantage for Azerbaijan in the 44-day war and offered the clearest evidence yet of how battlefields are being transformed by unmanned attack drones rolling off assembly lines around the world.



THE WASHINGTON POST

The expanding array of relatively low-cost drones can offer countries air power at a fraction of the cost of maintaining a traditional air force. The situation in Nagorno-Karabakh also underscored how drones can suddenly shift a long-standing conflict and leave ground forces highly exposed.

On Tuesday, Armenia accepted a cease-fire on punishing terms to possibly end the latest round of fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave controlled by ethnic Armenian factions but inside the internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan.

“Drones offer small countries very cheap access to tactical aviation and precision guided weapons, enabling them to destroy an opponent’s much-costlier equipment such as tanks and air defense systems,” said Michael Kofman, military analyst and director of Russia studies at CNA, a defense think tank in Arlington, Va. “An air force is a very expensive thing,” he added. “And they permit the utility of air power to smaller, much poorer nations.”

In Azerbaijan, the videos of the drone strikes have been posted daily on the website of the country’s Defense Ministry, broadcast on big screens in the capital, Baku, and tweeted and retweeted online. They were also studied by Western military analysts to track Azerbaijan’s swift military gains.

Thousands of protesters gathered in the Armenian capital, Yerevan, on Wednesday as pressure grew for Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to step down after agreeing to a deal that will see a 2,000-strong Russian peacekeeping mission and Azerbaijan regaining territory it lost in war in the early 1990s.

The deal came just after Azerbaijan took the strategic city of Shusha (known in Armenia as Shushi), a town of cultural importance to Azerbaijan perched high above the Nagorno-Karabakh capital, Stepanakert. As Azerbaijan forces advanced toward Shusha, its military propagandists published gruesome videos of drones destroying forces in trenches.

Armed drones expand

Armed drones have increasingly become part of warfare since the Pentagon deployed its Predator drone in Afghanistan following the 9/11 attacks. Missile-firing drones are now produced in many countries including Turkey, China and Israel, and have been used by various sides in battles including Libya's proxy war.

In a matter of months, however, Nagorno-Karabakh has become perhaps the most powerful example of how small and relatively inexpensive attack drones can change the dimensions of conflicts once dominated by ground battles and traditional air power.

It also highlighted the vulnerabilities of even sophisticated weapons systems, tanks, radars and surface-to-air missiles without specific drone defenses. And it has raised debate on whether the era of the traditional tank could be coming to an end.

Azerbaijan used its drone fleet — purchased from Israel and Turkey — to stalk and destroy Armenia's weapons systems in Nagorno-Karabakh, shattering its defenses, enabling a swift advance. Armenia found that air defense systems in Nagorno-Karabakh, many of them older Soviet systems, were impossible to defend against drone attacks, and losses quickly piled up.

Franz-Stefan Gady, a research fellow on future conflict at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said traditional military equipment such as tanks and armor vehicles will not become obsolete.

But Nagorno-Karabakh has shown “the ever-increasing importance” of using armed drones along with other weapons and highly trained ground forces and “the exponentially more devastating consequences of failing to do so in future wars,” he said.

'Massive losses'

The separatist region in Azerbaijan with a largely Armenian population broke away in the late 1980s leading to war and Azerbaijan's humiliating loss of the enclave and seven surrounding districts. A decades-long process, led by the United States, France and Russia, failed to reach a settlement.

Armenia became content with the status quo of a frozen conflict, retaining territory. But Azerbaijan, frustrated at a peace process that it felt delivered nothing, used its Caspian Sea oil wealth to buy arms, including a fleet of Turkish Bayraktar TB2 drones and Israeli kamikaze drones (also called loitering munitions, designed to hover in an area before diving on a target).

When fighting flared again Sept. 27, the drone videos playing on big screens in Baku and on YouTube stoked popular support for the war, even as Azerbaijan hid figures on its own war dead.

“It's pretty obvious that Azerbaijan has been preparing for this. Azerbaijan decided it wanted to change the status quo and that the Armenian side had no interest in a war because they wanted to keep what they had,” said Tom de Waal, expert on the Caucasus at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

“Clearly the decisive factor in this conflict is Turkey's intervention on Azerbaijan's side. They seem to be heavily coordinating the war effort,” he said, adding that it appeared Turkey had moved Syrian mercenaries into Azerbaijan two weeks before the conflict. Turkey denies recruiting Syrian mercenaries to fight in Nagorno-Karabakh.

And then there were the drones. Their targets included fortified positions from the 1990s.

“There were massive losses,” de Waal said. “Possibly around a third of Armenian tanks have been destroyed. That’s obviously been a critical factor in taking all those territories.”

Unable to match Azerbaijan’s drone power, Armenian forces, demoralized and wracked by covid-19, suffered a series of military calamities.

'Very hard to hide'

Officials from Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh said they had no choice but to sign Tuesday’s truce to avoid further losses of life and territory.

In the early stages of the war, Azerbaijan used 11 slow old Soviet-era An-2 aircraft that had been converted into drones and sent them buzzing over Nagorno-Karabakh as bait to Armenian air defense systems, tempting them to fire and reveal their positions, when they could be hit by drones. It used surveillance drones to spot targets and sent armed drones or kamikaze drones to destroy them, analysts said.

Turkey, which took part in joint military exercises with Azerbaijan forces in Azerbaijan over the summer, supports its ally but denies direct involvement in the fighting. But Azerbaijan probably benefited from Turkey’s experience of its recent use of drones in Syria as well as Libya, where its drones trounced the Russian-made Pantsir S1 air defense systems used by the Libyan National Army forces of Khalifa Hifter in May. Videos posted by both sides in Nagorno-Karabakh — including drone hits and soldiers advancing through villages and towns — enabled military analysts to tally confirmed hits.

Stijn Mitzer, an analyst writing on the [military-affairs blog Oryx](#), noted that both sides used propaganda to play up their military gains but that analysis of video footage made it possible to verify the claims. The group published a list of the destroyed military hardware, including photographic or video evidence for each tanks and weapon system.

Their [tally](#), which logs confirmed losses with photographs or videos, listed Armenian losses at 185 T-72 tanks; 90 armored fighting vehicles; 182 artillery pieces; 73 multiple rocket launchers; 26 surface-to-air missile systems, including a Tor system and five S-300s; 14 radars or jammers; one SU-25 war plane; four drones and 451 military vehicles.

Azerbaijan, the group concluded, had visually confirmed losses of 22 tanks, 41 armored forced vehicles, one helicopter, 25 drones and 24 vehicles. The full tally of losses on both sides cannot be independently verified, however Armenian losses appear significantly higher, according to military analysts.

The leader of Nagorno-Karabakh, Arayik Harutyunyan, said Tuesday that all of Nagorno-Karabakh would have been taken “within days” had fighting continued, citing the “very heavy human losses” inflicted by drones.

Malcolm Davis, a senior analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, wrote on the Real Clear Defense website that systems such as the kamikaze drone will probably become more prevalent as technology improves and costs go down.

“That’s a potential game-changer for land warfare,” he wrote.

The New Age of Police Reform

Domestic Preparedness online Journal - <https://www.domesticpreparedness.com/resilience/>

by JOSEPH W. TRINDAL Wed, October 21, 2020

As if the first two decades of the 21st century were not dynamic enough, the first year of the third decade has impacted every person on multiple levels. While the viral pandemic continues to affect every profession, health care professionals around the world are dramatically reassessing their service delivery models. The pandemic indiscriminately sweeps across geopolitical borders, similarly the strong call for social justice reforms is traversing the globe demanding action and change. For example, within hours of the tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, demonstrations insisting on social justice reform emerged in cities worldwide. The energy behind these demonstrations and even violent protests continue to fuel police reform measures beyond the U.S. In a series of four articles, the *DomPrep Journal* will examine the foremost initiatives of modern police reform in America.



Much of the world looks to the U.S. as an innovative leader in democratic policing. Therefore, the modern U.S. police reform movement will shape global democratic policing for decades to come. Calls for reform range from sound initiatives – building upon collaboration and inclusion – to extreme calls for eliminating public police services all together. This article, together with other articles in this series, will cover a select number of the most prominent or most promising police reform initiatives. It is important to recognize that police reform is a continuing journey of improving and right-sizing the police-citizen coexistence. There are lessons to be drawn from the origins of modern democratic policing that hold relevance to 21st century reforms.

The Original Democratic Police Reform Movement

The foundation of values in policing democratic societies trace its origins to a [reform movement](#) in London in the 1820s. At that time, Home Secretary Sir Robert Peel led a landmark transition from privatization to public policing in order to establish professional standards and effectiveness, which had to be balanced against public consent of policing. Peel is credited as the father of modern policing with the passage of the [Metropolitan Police Act of 1829](#). The importance of professionalizing police service was reflected in an enormous record of instructions, orders, and memoranda issued to govern police service.

In just over 30 years, [instructions to police](#) occupied 22 volumes that are historically preserved by the London Metropolitan police. The lessons drawn from creation of the London Metropolitan Police (Met) emphasize community and police cohesion. Early police service performance metrics at the Met emphasized crime prevention over arrests and enforcement action. The [Nine Peelian Principles of Police Service](#), drawn from those early instructions, still remain relevant in the 21st century, as Americans continue the journey of improving their police service approach. Essentially, there are four pillars of the modern British policing model, which share relevance with U.S. police reform today: (1) consent of the public, (2) accountability to the rule of law, (3) restrained use of force, and (4) independence from political influence. Considering these core pillars, police services in the U.S. – as in other democracies – are presented with [inherent friction](#) between “consent and balance” and “independence and accountability.”

Four pillars of U.S. police reform – past and present – include public consent, rule of law, restrained use of force, and independence from political influence.

Reorganization & Fiscal Reprioritization

In January 2020, the Chicago Police Department (CPD) announced sweeping [reorganizational initiatives](#) under Interim Police Chief Charlie Beck (former Los Angeles Chief of Police). CPD's steps include reallocation of personnel such that sworn officers previously working in administrative and support positions are returned to [field assignments](#) to perform patrol duties. This provides greater police connection with communities in preventing and deterring crime. Homicide Division detective assignments have also been decentralized with the added overall emphasis on precinct-based command accountability. Beck's expectations are that [decentralizing homicide detectives](#) to assigned areas will increase investigative effectiveness resulting in higher and faster case clearance rates through closer community connections.

One of CPD's most progressive restructuring initiatives is the creation of the Office of Constitutional Policing and Reform, placed under the command of Deputy Superintendent Barbara West. In advancing CPD's implementation of the [2019 Chicago Police Consent Decree](#), the Office of Constitutional Policing and Reform is organizationally on par with the Office of Operations as the two main sections in CPD. The Los Angeles Police Department (CA) also has an [Office of Constitutional Policing and Policy](#) as one of a number of organizational reforms under the [2001 Los Angeles Police Consent Decree](#) and other initiatives. Other agencies have taken similar measures, for example, Long Beach Police Department (CA) announced in August 2020 the creation of the [Office of Constitutional Policing](#) to "rethink traditional policing in a manner that will help implement equity, justice, and constitutional public safety."

Additionally, [CPD's Use of Force Policy](#), updated 29 February 2020, states that "the Department's highest priority is the sanctity of human life." In keeping with the Peelian principles, the revised policy adds that "a strong partnership with the public is essential for effective law enforcement." CPD's revised policy also requires CPD officers to "ensure compliance by themselves and other members" of CPD, adding further instructions to "act to intervene" and "immediately" report observed excessive force of fellow officers.

Coinciding with New York's Office of Attorney General's July 2020 release of the [Preliminary Report on the New York City Police Department's Response to Demonstrations Following the Death of George Floyd](#), New York [Attorney General Letitia James](#) called for moving oversight of the New York Police Department (NYPD), the largest U.S. municipal police department, from the purview of the mayor to an independent commission. In June 2020, the New York City Council voted to reallocate \$1 billion from NYPD's nearly \$6 billion budget. To put this example in context, while enacted amid calls for defunding NYPD, [NYC reported](#) a \$9 billion loss in revenue due to COVID, and the council's passage of an \$88.1 billion 2021 budget was a 7.6% reduction from Mayor DeBlasio's original \$95.3 billion budget request. As a result, NYPD canceled its July academy class and is under a hiring freeze, as are many other city departments, except those performing health and safety responsibilities. Some like former Deputy Major Richard Buery Jr. [criticized the NYPD cuts](#), tweeting that "these aren't really cuts to NYPD and don't reflect a fundamental shift in the nature of policing in NYC."

According to *Forbes* in August 2020, over a dozen other police departments have received budget cuts to their police services. Seattle's City Council voted in September to override the mayor's veto of immediate police department budget cuts. Council's budget authorization for Seattle Police Department (SPD) projects workforce reduction through layoffs and attrition of nearly 100 by the end of 2020. Subsequent to the council's vote, then Chief Carmen Best announced her retirement. Best pointed out that the council's salary cuts and layoffs would inflict the most harm on younger, more diverse officers due to the seniority rules. Seattle's cuts to SPD also impact school resource officer programs and other specialized units, like harbor patrol and mounted (equestrian) patrols. As part of Seattle's Navigation Teams, an interdepartmental program operated in cooperation with Seattle's Human Services Department, specially

trained police help the [homeless population relocate](#) from the streets to shelters and into a variety of social services.



Department of Treasury, IRS Criminal Investigations Special Agents – Public Domain

Many studies have shown higher incidence of mental illness among homeless populations. [Homeless adults with mental illness](#) are more likely to engage in criminal behavior and become crime victims than adults with mental illness in shelters. Seattle’s plan for [eliminating the Navigation Teams program](#), of which police participation has been critically viewed by some as street sweeping and retraumatizing homeless, also affects Seattle’s Human Services participation, thereby providing no alternative redirection assistance to this vulnerable population. U.S. Attorney General William Barr issued a statement regarding Chief Best’s abrupt resignation commending her on her dedication while acknowledging her frustration. The [attorney general’s press release](#) also admonished state and local governments, “This experience should be a lesson to state and local leaders about the real costs of irresponsible proposals to defund the police.”

Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) is facing funding reductions that will diminish the nation’s second largest police department to 2007 staffing levels. Reducing police officers on patrol assignments increases response time and adversely impacts crime prevention through patrol presence. These reductions disproportionately affect socioeconomically disadvantaged communities. Resource constraints, like those imposed on LAPD and other police departments, require organizational realignment to operate within available resources. During periods of budgetary austerity, police services can no longer be the solution to all problems. Public safety communications specialists (dispatchers) have limited resources available to direct an ever-growing number of calls for services.

In 2019, [LAPD responded](#) to 20,757 mental health crisis related calls for service, most of which did not require enforcement action. To address the rise in mental health crisis calls, LAPD had created the Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU) comprised of officers specially trained as System-wide Mental Assessment Response Teams (SMART) paired with a clinician from the LA Department of Mental Health. Reduced LAPD workforce and availability to send officers to specialized training, like the SMART program, will impact Los

Angeles City’s ability to effectively address the nearly 21,000 mental health crisis calls help, which according to LAPD resulted in 456 weapons confiscations in 2019.

In a September 2020 [interview with Attorney General Barr](#), Chief Steven R. Casstevens, who is president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, asked about the fiscal and resource austerity approach some communities are taking toward achieving police reform. The attorney general pointed out that defunding “is counterproductive and will lead to more victims.” The attorney general added that law enforcement agencies need to improve community-based and national messaging about law enforcement. In response to Casstevens’ question about the future of policing, the attorney general pointed out the realities of fiscal constraints facing all government levels of law enforcement. He added that recruiting and retention will be challenging. Community trust and respect are important aspects of attracting the best people to the police profession.

Barr pointed out that the federal agencies’ support to state and local law enforcement in combatting violent crime is as important today as it was when he was attorney general in the early 1990s. He cited examples in which the U.S. Department of Justice’s (DOJ) [Operation Legend](#), launched in July, has significantly reduced violent crime by applying federal interagency law enforcement personnel to work with state and local police in highly successful task force models.

Other Aspects of Current Police Reform

Leading up to and catapulted by the George Floyd tragedy in Minnesota, the current drive for improving police service and reinspiring community trust is far more complex than just budgets or organizational structures. There was great debate 200 years ago in London about the risks of publicly funded police to citizen freedom. A year after the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829 with the creation of the London Metropolitan Police, there was a cry to abolish the police over militarization of policing and the lack of transparency eroding public trust in procedural justice, “let us institute a police system in the [hands of the people](#).”

This article is Part 1 of a four-part series on New Age of Police Reform. The following parts (Links below) will address the call for reforms in police hiring and promotion diversity and inclusion. Note: part 4 has yet to be released.

<i>Podcast– Law</i>	<i>Enforcement’s</i>	<i>Perfect</i>	<i>Storm</i>	<i>2020</i>			
<i>Part-1– Introduction</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>New</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>of</i>	<i>Police</i>	<i>Reform</i>
<i>Part-2– Building</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>Trust</i>	<i>Through</i>	<i>an</i>	<i>Inclusive</i>	<i>Police</i>	<i>Workforce</i>
<i>Part-3– Police</i>	<i>Accountability</i>	<i>&</i>	<i>Oversight:</i>	<i>Redundancies</i>	<i>&</i>	<i>Opportunities</i>	
<i>Part 4 – National Police Reform: Intergovernmental Friction & Cohesion</i>							

Report on World Geography and U.S. Strategy

RUSI VI Editor : This explains much about the US view of the World

The following is the Nov. 5, 2020 Congressional Research Service In Focus report, Defense Primer: Geography, Strategy, and U.S. Force Design.

World geography is an influence on U.S. strategy, which in turn helps shape the design of U.S. military forces.

World Geography and U.S. Strategy

Most of the world's people, resources, and economic activity are located not in the Western Hemisphere, but in the other hemisphere, particularly Eurasia. In response to this basic feature of world geography, U.S. policymakers for the last several decades have chosen to pursue, as a key element of U.S. national strategy, a goal of preventing the emergence of regional hegemony in Eurasia. This objective reflects a U.S. perspective on geopolitics and grand strategy developed by U.S. strategists and policymakers during and in the years immediately after World War II that incorporates two key judgments:

- that given the amount of people, resources, and economic activity in Eurasia, a regional hegemon in Eurasia would represent a concentration of power large enough to be able to threaten vital U.S. interests; and
- that Eurasia is not dependably self-regulating in terms of preventing the emergence of regional hegemony, meaning that the countries of Eurasia cannot be counted on to be fully able to prevent, through their own choices and other actions, the emergence of regional hegemony, and may need assistance from one or more countries outside Eurasia to be able to do this dependably.

Preventing the emergence of regional hegemony in Eurasia is sometimes also referred to as preserving a division of power in Eurasia, or as preventing key regions in Eurasia from coming under the domination of a single power, or as preventing the emergence of a spheres-of-influence world, which could be a consequence of the emergence of one or more regional hegemony in Eurasia. The Trump Administration's December 2017 national security strategy document states that the United States "will compete with all tools of national power to ensure that regions of the world are not dominated by one power."

Although U.S. policymakers do not often state explicitly in public the goal of preventing the emergence of regional hegemony in Eurasia, U.S. military operations in World War I and World War II, as well as numerous U.S. military wartime and day-to-day operations since World War II, appear to have been carried out in no small part in support of this goal.

U.S. Strategy and Force Design

The goal of preventing the emergence of regional hegemony in Eurasia is a major reason why the U.S. military is structured with force elements that enable it to deploy from the United States, cross broad expanses of ocean and air space, and then conduct sustained, large-scale military operations upon arrival in Eurasia or the waters and airspace surrounding Eurasia. Force elements associated with this objective include, among other things:

- An Air Force with significant numbers of long-range bombers, long-range surveillance aircraft, and aerial refueling tankers.
- A Navy with significant numbers of aircraft carriers, nuclear-powered (as opposed to non-nuclear-powered) attack submarines, large surface combatants, large amphibious ships, and underway replenishment ships.

- Significant numbers of long-range Air Force airlift aircraft and Military Sealift Command sealift ships for transporting ground forces personnel and their equipment and supplies rapidly over long distances.

Consistent with a goal of being able to conduct sustained, large-scale military operations in Eurasia or the oceans and airspace surrounding Eurasia, the United States also stations significant numbers of forces and supplies in forward locations in Europe, the Persian Gulf, and the Indo-Pacific.

Comparing U.S. Forces to Other Countries' Forces The United States is the only country in the world that designs its military to depart one hemisphere, cross broad expanses of ocean and air space, and then conduct sustained, large-scale military operations upon arrival in another hemisphere. The other countries in the Western Hemisphere do not design their forces to do this because they cannot afford to, and because the United States is, in effect, doing it for them. Countries in the other hemisphere do not design their forces to do this for the very basic reason that they are already in the other hemisphere, and consequently instead spend their defense money primarily on forces that are tailored largely for influencing events in their own local regions of that hemisphere. (Some countries, such as Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France, have an ability to deploy forces to distant locations, but only on a much smaller scale.)

The fact that the United States designs its military to do something that other countries do not design their forces to do can be important to keep in mind when comparing the U.S. military to the militaries of other nations. For example, the U.S. Navy has 11 aircraft carriers while other countries have no more than one or two. Other countries do not need a significant number of aircraft carriers because, unlike the United States, they are not designing their forces to cross broad expanses of ocean and air space and then conduct sustained, large-scale military aircraft operations upon arrival in distant locations.

As another example, it is sometimes noted, in assessing the adequacy of U.S. naval forces, that U.S. naval forces are equal in tonnage to the next several navies combined, and that most of those several navies are the navies of U.S. allies. Those other fleets, however, are mostly of Eurasian countries, which do not design their forces to cross to the other side of the world and then conduct sustained, largescale military operations upon arrival in distant locations. The fact that the U.S. Navy is much bigger than allied navies does not necessarily prove that U.S. naval forces are either sufficient or excessive; it simply reflects the differing and generally more limited needs that U.S. allies have for naval forces. (It might also reflect an underinvestment by some of those allies to meet even their more limited naval needs.)

Measuring the Sufficiency of U.S. Forces Countries have differing needs for military forces. The United States, as a country located in the Western Hemisphere with a goal of preventing the emergence of regional hegemony in Eurasia, has defined a need for military forces that is quite different from the needs of countries that are located in Eurasia. The sufficiency of U.S. military forces consequently is best assessed not through comparison to the militaries of other countries (something that is done quite frequently), but against U.S. strategic goals, which in turn reflect U.S. policymaker judgments about the U.S. role in the world. Strategy Is a Policy Choice, Force Design Is a Consequence The fact that U.S. policymakers for the last several decades have chosen to pursue, as a key element of U.S. national strategy, a goal of preventing the emergence of regional hegemony in Eurasia, does not necessarily mean that this goal was a correct one for the United States to pursue, or that it would be a correct one for the United States to pursue in the future. Whether it would be a correct one for the United States to pursue in the future would depend on policymaker views regarding the two key judgments outlined earlier. A decision on whether the United States should continue to pursue a goal of preventing the emergence of regional hegemony in Eurasia would then influence U.S. military force design for the future.

Something Else – Links to Thought Provoking Articles

Sustaining Strong, Secure and Engaged Funding: What the COVID-19 Pandemic Means for Defence Funding in Canada

<http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vol20/no4/page60-eng.asp>

After the Pandemic: Confronting a New Geo-Strategic Environment in the Post-COVID-19 Era

https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/files/pdf/20201021_AfterThePandemic_Shimooka_PAPER_FWeb.pdf

Are you looking for another rabbit hole to go down? RUSI (UK) is a good starting point with weekly commentary.

<https://www.rusi.org/>

The Government of Spain has expressed its grave concern over the events unfolding in Peru following the impeachment of Martín Vizcarra.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/17112020-spain-express-concern-over-situation-in-peru>

The Five-Power Defense Arrangement – Opinion Piece

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/17112020-the-five-power-defense-arrangement-oped>

Still More Help Needed for Veterans: Lt.-Gen. Roméo Dallaire

<https://ipolitics.ca/2020/11/13/still-more-help-needed-for-veterans-lt-gen-romeo-dallaire/>

Canada's New Frigate Will Be Brimming with Missiles

<https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/37506/canadas-new-frigate-will-be-brimming-with-missiles>