Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia

Dispatches

30 October 2026

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

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

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

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

The next issue will be on 13 November 2026.

Quick links:

Events
Publications
@RUSI_NS on X
Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia on Facebook
Other Sources
Odds and Sods
SAC Notes

RUSI(NS) on LinkedIn

RUSI(NS) is available on LinkedIn at: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/19653001. It is a public group, so anyone, RUSI(NS) members and non-members, can join. Everyone is encouraged to submit content to be posted to the group. Email content to: Cdr (ret'd) Ian Wood, Group Page Administrator, ian@idhwood.ca

Writing for RUSI(NS)

The content of *Dispatches* and other RUSI(NS) channels is representative of the submissions by RUSI(NS) members. If you want more published about certain fields and topics, you are encouraged to submit material to RUSIDispatches@gmail.com and RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com. The public face of RUSI(NS) is what we, the membership, makes it.

Contributions to RUSI(NS) social media

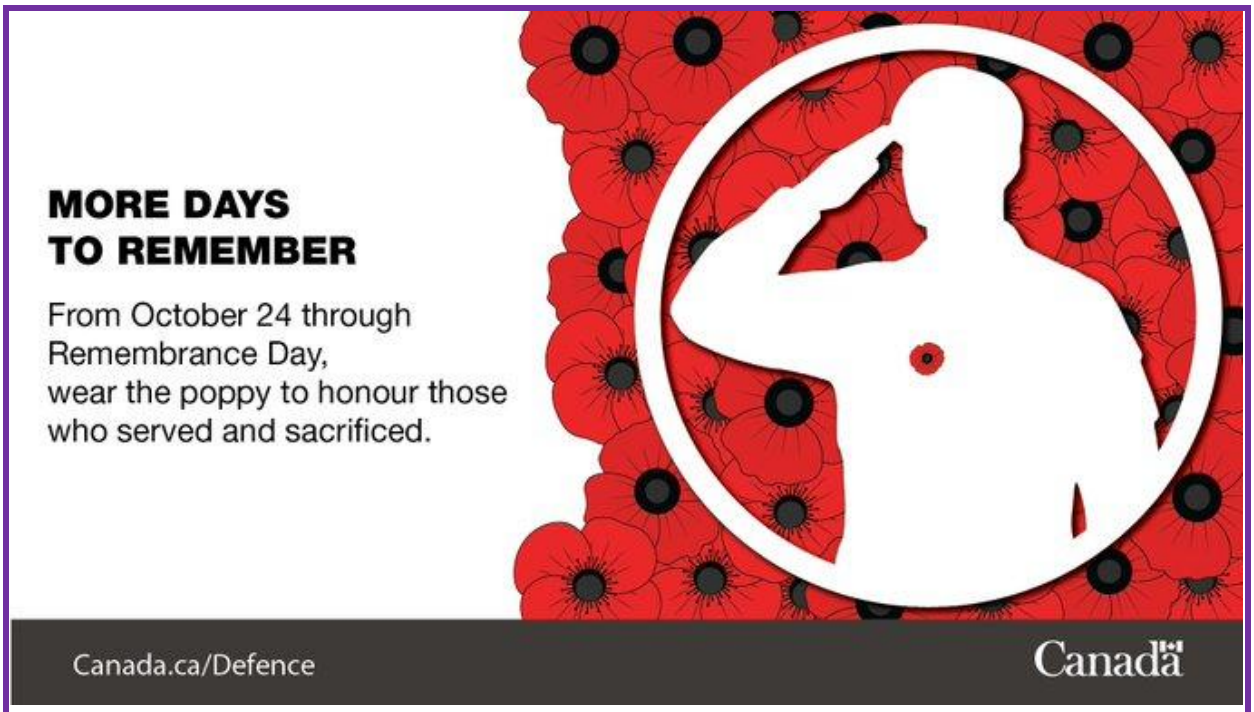
You are encouraged to send material to be posted to the RUSI(NS) X, Facebook and LinkedIn accounts. For X and Facebook, email to rusinsdispatches@gmail.com. For LinkedIn, email to Cdr (ret'd) Ian Wood, Group Page Administrator, at ian@idhwood.ca. Preferably, send the material ready to post. We are looking for a volunteer(s) to be editor(s) for the X and Facebook accounts in order to keep them active.

RUSI(NS) Website

Good progress is being made on bringing our website back up after it was hacked. Whilst there is still no ETR ATT, it is hoped to have it available soon for posting presentations, commentaries, etc.

Events

To list an event in *Dispatches*, email RUSI(NS) by noon Thursday. RUSI(NS) events are by invitation. If you are interested in attending and have not been invited, email RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com. RUSI(NS) events may be cancelled at short notice. Email RUSI(NS) if there is a question of an event occurring.



Military Personnel Command @milperscom posted: CAF members: starting this year, the poppy will be worn on all uniforms starting October 24. This change will provide a longer and more consistent period for wearing the poppy. For guidance on wearing a poppy on a CAF uniform: https://canada.ca/en/services/defence/caf/military-identity-system/dress-manual/chapter-3/section-7.html#7-42

RUSI(NS) Events: November-December 2026

November
- **4 November, Wednesday,** Remembrance Dinner, RA Park, 1830 hrs (Atlantic Time);
- **10 November**, meeting with John Whiteley, Minister Counsellor for Political Affairs, U.S. Embassy, Ottawa;
- **11 November, Wednesday,** Remembrance Day, RUSI(NS) "Parade" at RA Park, 1030 hrs;
- **24 November, Tuesday,** 1300 to 1500 (Atlantic Time), Capt(N) Tom Tulloch's Presentation: "The History of the Halifax Shipyard", RA Park;
- **25 November, Wednesday,** tour ISI, TBC.

December
- **3 December, Thursday,** Presentation on RCAF Modernization, 1300 hrs, (Atlantic Time), Mighty Maroon Room, TBC;
  9 December, Wednesday, Presentation on RCN strategy, details TBA;
- **10 December, Thursday,** Winter/Holiday Meet and Greet, RA Park.

Proposed Presentations and Events for 2027:

a. CCG Aircraft Service Delivery, tentative January 27
b. Industry Canada Update discussion group or presentation, February 2027
c. CBSA Intelligence Centre Mar 27
d. Irving Shipbuilding Industries, 2nd tour, April 27
e. The Future of Maritime Air, May 27
f. Naval Modernization/Corvette Program, June 27
g. Canadian Tactical Helo program, September 27
h. Army of the Future/Equipment Update, October 27
i. Naval Mine Warfare/Advanced Naval Capabilities, TBC
j. Canada's International Defence Commitments, TBC
k. Canada's Commercial Fleet/Modernization/rebuild? TBC
l. Sanctions Development and Implementation discussion group
m. Arctic Security Discussion Group
n. OSINT Discussion Group
o European Joint Task Force - Should Canada Join? discussion group
p. Army Reorg Update, Inflection Point 2025
r. Canada's Drone Program Update.

It should be noted that these are all proposals and are subject to change. New ideas and concepts are welcome to next year's program. The dates shown are aspirational.

New: **8 October-12 November -** Lieutenant-Colonel (retired) Ian MacVicar, Instructor, 6 Weeks-Fall Term Course: "North of 60 (Part 2): Mining Minerals or Fueling Fights?" at Courses Fall 2026 – Seniors' College Association of Nova Scotia In-Person: Church Hall - Hope United Church, 3055 Connaught Avenue, Halifax and Online: Zoom.
Registration link: https://www.thescans.org/registration.html or hotlink: Registration - Seniors' College Association of Nova Scotia

New: **24 November, Tuesday -** RUSI(NS) member Capt(N) Tom Tulloch RCN (ret'd) will present "The History of the Halifax Shipyard", covering from inception of the shipyard to the mid-20th century. The presentation will take in the construction of the facility, its pre-Great War existence, the 1917 explosion and aftermath, and its function as both a ship repair facility and a ship building facility since the explosion. The event will be hybrid, online (Teams) and in person at Royal Artillery Park Officers' Mess, 1300-1500 Atlantic time.
To register, email RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com by close-of-business Sun, 22 November.

Wargaming Events: Georgetown University Wargaming Society long-range schedule: https://www.guwargaming.org/guwsevents

Publications

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

weekly:
RUSI-A *Newsletter*: https://rusi.au/Newsletters.php
Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (Australia) *Defence Update*
Vancouver Artillery Association and Royal United Services Institute Vancouver *Members News*

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

monthly:
Canadian Gunner News
Edmonton United Services Institute President's *Enews*
Military Institute of Windsor *Communiqué*
Royal Alberta United Services Institute *Dispatches*
Royal Canadian Logistics Service *The Logistician*
Royal Canadian Naval Association Admiral Hose Branch *Scuttlebutt*
Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver Island *Newsletter*
Veterans Affairs Canada *Salute*!
RUSI-NSW *Newsletter* (**new:** October): https://rusinsw.au/site/Newsletters.php

quarterly:
Naval Reserve Association of Canada *Connexions* (latest: September):
https://navalreserveassociationofcanada.ca/connexions/
Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (Australia) *Quarterly Newsletter*
RUSI-A *United Service* journal: https://rusi.au/Publications.php#Journal

other:
RUSI-A monographs: https://rusi.au/Monographs.php
RUSI-A lectures: https://rusi.au/Videos/Videos.php
RUSI-A podcasts: https://rusi.au/SIG_S/Strategy.php
There are links on the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies Australia (RUSI-A) home page (https://www.rusi.org.au/) to the seven branches across Australia.

Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies Australia

There are links on the RUSI-A home page (https://www.rusi.org.au/) to the seven branches across Australia, including New South Wales whose newsletter is also listed below:
RUSI-A United Service (quarterly): https://rusi.au/Publications.php#Journal
RUSI-A Newsletter (weekly): https://rusi.au/Newsletters.php
RUSI-NSW Newsletter (weekly): https://rusinsw.au/site/Newsletters.php
RUSI-A monographs: https://rusi.au/Monographs.php
RUSI-A lectures: https://rusi.au/Videos/Videos.php
RUSI-A podcasts: https://rusi.au/SIG_S/Strategy.php

Last/This Week in Canadian History:

- On 20 October 1940, HMS *Windflower*, the first corvette built in Canada, is commissioned into the Royal Navy with a Canadian crew. She is turned over to the RCN in 1941.

- On 21 October 1805, Battle of Trafalgar - The nationality of seamen in the Royal Navy aboard HMC *Victoria* was assorted. Of the crew of 820, 720 came from the British Isles, and over 12% came from many other parts of the world with 1 "African", 1 Brazilian, 2 Danish, 4 French, 2 Indian, 6 Maltese, 1 Portuguese, 2 Swiss, 22 American, 2 Canadian, 7 Dutch, 2 German, 1 Jamaican, 2 Norwegian, 4 Swedish, 4 West Indian, and 48 Unknown.

- On 21 October 1910, HMCS *Niobe* arrives in Halifax, the first Canadian warship to arrive at her base in Canada. Now officially celebrated by the RCN as Niobe Day.

- On 23 October 1939, HMCS *Saguenay* (Destroyer) intercepted the German tanker Emmy Friederich which scuttled herself.

- On 28 October 1940, *The Empress of Britain* built in Glasgow Scotland, owned by Canadian Pacific Steamships, and registered in London England was requisitioned by the UK government 25 September 1939 and was immediately converted into a troopship. After several successful transoceanic voyages, she was attacked and set ablaze with bombs by a German Condor maritime patrol aircraft 55 nm NW of County Mayo, Ireland.

@RUSI_NS on X
To have something posted or reposted, email RUSI(NS).

"If Canada picks the Gripen fighter, these local firms would help Saab deliver the jets"

https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2026/10/28/if-canada-picks-the-gripen-fighter-these-local-firms-would-help-saab-deliver-the-jets/

@RCAF_ARC H/T @MilitaryTimes @DavidPugliese

International Naval & Maritime News @NavalNews 27 Oct posted and RUSI(NS) reposted:
Navy's own studies say Canada needs 22 submarines, not 12
(https://www.vanguarddefence.ca/p/navy-s-own-studies-say-canada-needs-22-submarines-not-12)

It would be interesting to see a map depiction, similar to the map in "The Navy Canada Needs" as presented by VAdm Topshee at the Coxford lecture, that shows how 22 SSK conceptually would be employed. That many boats could allow 6-7 patrol areas?

Naval News @navalnewscom 27 Oct posted and RUSI(NS) reposted:
Canada modifies River-class Destroyer combat system design to focus on Aegis and MOTS solutions By @rich_scott2

Royal Canadian Air Force @RCAF_ARC 23 Oct posted and RUSI(NS) reposted:

The RCAF received its first two CF35As yesterday at Luke Air Force Base in Arizona. The future of air and space power is built on more than equipment alone.

(Canada GCAP observer role to strengthen defence ties

https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/canada-gcap-observer-role-to-strengthen-defence-ties/)

UK Defence Journal @UKDefJournal 22 Oct posted and RUSI(NS) reposted:
Canada's involvement as an observer in the Global Combat Air Programme will further strengthen British bilateral defence cooperation with Canada, building on decades of close collaboration.

(Canada GCAP observer role to strengthen defence ties https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/canada-gcap-observer-role-to-strengthen-defence-ties/)

National Post @nationalpost 17 Oct posted and RUSI(NS) reposted:

Canada war-gamed a U.S. invasion. A former NORAD commander explains why (https://nationalpost.com/news/canada-war-gamed-a-u-s-invasion-a-former-norad-commander-explains-why)

NATO Association of Canada @NATOCanada 17 Oct posted and RUSI(NS) reposted:

Autonomous shipping is no longer a distant technological concept. As Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) move toward practical international implementation, NATO must consider how these vessels could reshape Allied maritime security.

(The Autonomous Ocean:
Preparing NATO for the Future of Maritime Security
https://natoassociation.ca/the-autonomous-ocean-preparing-nato-for-the-future-of-maritime-security/)

Canadian Coast Guard @CoastGuardCAN 16 Oct posted
(video
https://x.com/CoastGuardCAN/status/2111155214648529198
) and

RUSI(NS) reposted:
Our Dash-8 aircraft play a crucial role in surveillance

and security operations. Their capabilities were on full display during exercise ARCTIC GHOST in late September with the @RoyalCanNavy and @rcmpgrcpolice.

@NoahGairn 15 Oct posted (https://x.com/NoahGairn/status/2110842058713776359):

Canadian Coast Guard ships Des Groseilliers and Louis S. St-Laurent complete first security patrols in Canada's Arctic waters

Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia" on Facebook
To have something posted or commented, email RUSI(NS).

Australia is a regional maritime power. It should act like it
https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/australia-is-a-regional-maritime-power-it-should-act-like-it/

"Australia should embrace its role as a regional maritime power by stating it openly, confidently, in its strategy and in the speeches of senior leaders. Secondly, Australia should look for ways to expand the maritime exercises, training, doctrinal and maintenance support that it provides – all key aspects of its role as a regional maritime power. Thirdly, Australia should consider new ways to enhance its influence as a regional maritime power."

An Australian piece but its points are worth taking away by Canada.

Mammoet, Port of Argentia and Argentia Capital partner to advance floating dry dock and marine repair facility
https://maritimemag.com/en/mammoet-port-of-argentia-and-argentia-capital-partner-to-advance-floating-dry-dock-and-marine-repair-facility/

"At the centre of the initiative is Tugdock's Submersible Platform (TSP), a modular floating dry dock system designed to accommodate a wide range of vessels and industrial applications. Its scalable design provides a flexible alternative to conventional dry-docking infrastructure and can adapt to evolving market requirements."

Interesting. Might the TSP be a means to increase Canada's dry dock capacity relatively quickly? It is appreciated that a response to the global situation(s) is the capability to build

(war)ships quickly and easily (shade of the late 1930s and decision to build what became corvettes). Building more vessels and quicker consequently leads to an increased demand for more marine infrastructure. Can TSP dry docks be built fast enough? Are they mobile enough to allow for operational (and industrial) flexibility?

Marine infrastructure, especially dry docks and mobile dry docks, needs to be a consideration when assessing Canada's maritime/sea power. Development of marine infrastructure should be a deliberate part/objective of the Canadian National Shipbuilding Strategy, not just expected as a result of contracting shipyards to build government ships.

Royal Navy could acquire up to six Norwegian-built motherships
https://www.navylookout.com/royal-navy-could-acquire-up-to-six-norwegian-built-motherships/

'Mothership', Offshore Support Vessel (OSV), Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV), multi-role type vessel, ocean-going support ship, mobile base, Multi-Role Ocean Surveillance Vessel (MROS). All sorts of descriptive names for a variety of envisioned roles. Hopefully the multiplicity of it all doesn't result in less capability in any of the roles (mine hunting, drone carrier, ocean surveillance, etc.), and in confusion when the vessels get officially/operationally typed.

"A common class of versatile support ships could make a useful contribution to the Hybrid Navy, particularly as the RN seeks to operate growing numbers of autonomous systems without tying up scarce major warships."

That's the interesting point. Like corvettes in the late 1930s, a vessel that could be built quickly in large numbers in many yards (albeit the corvette was meant to be a regional patrol vessel, not a convoy escort, and it was poor at that as it was). Maybe the FASST-V is the Canadian parallel.

Other Sources

#air warfare #NATO
F-35 Fallacy: Jets Alone Will Not Save Us
https://www.thecipherbrief.com/f-35-fallacy-jets-alone-will-not-save-us
NATO "states must balance platform acquisition with systemic survivability across five core areas:
Institutionalize Dispersal and Agile Combat Employment
Harden the Perimeter and the Flight Line
Expand Logistics at Strategic Depth

Solve the Cross-Domain Data Mesh
Re-arm and Re-train the Ground Crew”

#artificial intelligence
The lack of a shared lexicon is undermining responsible AI-military integration
https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2026/10/data-fragmentation-challenge-ai-military/416632/

#Canadian Armed Forces
US Army’s 8th Psychological Operations Group inactivated
https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2026/10/16/us-armys-8th-psychological-operations-group-inactivated/
"The term “inactivation” signifies that the group is being decommissioned for an indeterminate period during some form of restructuring and reorganization — not necessarily that it is being deactivated or dissolved."
The article underscores how confusing organizational/re-organizational terms can be at times. This applies to the Canadian Armed Forces, too**.**

#Canadian Armed Forces
Cloud TAK evolution: From a military to public safety capability
https://canadianarmytoday.com/cloud-tak-evolution-from-a-military-to-public-safety-capability/
GUARD (Government Unified Architecture for Response and Defence), a suite of applications for situational awareness, personnel and platform tracking, geospatial mapping, and command and control connecting military and public safety partners**.**

#Canadian Army
Army to convert two armoured subunits into uncrewed squadrons next summer
https://www.vanguarddefence.ca/p/army-to-convert-two-armoured-subunits-into-uncrewed-squadrons-next-summer
The vehicle in the feature image is a Second World War Bren Gun Carrier, maybe not the best choice for a drones-related article**.**

#Canadian Army
Army official says new command structure passed first test at Wainwright
https://www.vanguarddefence.ca/p/army-official-says-new-command-structure-passed-first-test-at-wainwright
Interesting that it was the commander of the 1st Canadian Division (the maneuvre division) who led the response.

Cyber Intelligence
The PRC has launched multiple major AI based hacking campaigns. 16 South Korean financial institutions were hit in the first wave of one campaign. This was followed by three more as we drafted this report. Japan declared a ‘National Cyber Emergency’ due to a separate major campaign, which continues to claim victims. The PRC’s new tool is Artex AI, which was also used to attack Connectwise. PRC’s ‘Warp Panda’ is hacking U.S. Legal Firms while ‘Warp Typhoon’ targets telecommunications and aerospace firms. The PRC’s ‘Warlock

Ransomware' attacks through Microsoft Sharepoint, while a new PRC hacking team appears to be getting started. Australia warns that there is worse coming.

Remember the hack of grocery store freezers in France?
https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/french-supermarket-chain-intermarche-hit-by-cyberattack-150-stories-targeted-2026-10-12/

Pentagon treating military base freezer malfunctions as suspected cyberattack, officials say
https://www.reuters.com/technology/pentagon-treating-military-base-freezer-malfunctions-suspected-cyberattack-2026-10-29/

Be careful who you ask for help: Fake IT help desk chats in Teams deliver malware and Chaos ransomware
https://betanews.com/article/fake-teams-help-desk-chaos-ransomware/

#cyber operations
Has Canada entered the grey zone?
https://thestateofthingsca.substack.com/p/has-canada-entered-the-grey-zone

#drones
Attack of the Drones – The Hundred-Year History of Military UAVs
https://militaryhistorynow.com/2020/09/23/attack-of-the-drones-the-hundred-year-history-of-military-uavs/

#drones
Britain studies US autonomous warfare command for lessons
https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/britain-studies-us-autonomous-warfare-command-for-lessons/
What organization will Canada establish?

#drones #Indo-Pacific #warfare #defence industry
Drones, Missiles, and the U.S. Munitions Shortage
https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/drones-missiles-and-the-u-s-munitions-shortage

#economic warfare
Economic Statecraft Lexicon
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/programs/geoeconomics-center/economic-statecraft-initiative/economic-statecraft-lexicon/

#Indo-Pacific #Russia-Ukraine Ware
Diesel, Starlink and the Price of Trust
https://mickryan.substack.com/p/diesel-starlink-and-the-price-of

#land warfare #deception
Deception in Mass Autonomous Warfare
https://warontherocks.com/deception-in-mass-autonomous-warfare/

#land warfare #drones #Russia-Ukraine War
Dispersion Will Not Save You: Survivability in the Age of Middle-Strike Drones
https://mwi.westpoint.edu/dispersion-will-not-save-you-survivability-in-the-age-of-middle-strike-drones/

#maritime security
Winning the Undersea Knife Fight - A Deterrence Framework to Shape Subsea Dilemmas into Competitive Maritime Security Strategies
https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA4027-1.html

#naval warfare
Closing the Sea: Lessons from Ancient Mediterranean Blockades
https://cimsec.org/closing-the-sea-lessons-from-ancient-mediterranean-blockades/
Lessons in blockading, topical and applicable.

#Royal Canadian Air Force
What About Polish Black Hawks? (sorta)
https://www.truenorthstrategicreview.ca/p/what-about-polish-black-hawks-sorta

#Royal Canadian Air Force
Why Saab Gripen E would Beat F-35
https://erikexplores.substack.com/p/why-saab-gripen-e-would-beat-f-35

#Royal Canadian Air Force
The F-47 vs. Gripen Could Little Sweden Outthink the Pentagon?
https://erikexplores.substack.com/p/the-f-47-vs-gripen-could-little-sweden

#Royal Canadian Air Force
How Gripen Philosophy Could Beat the F-35
https://erikexplores.substack.com/p/how-gripen-philosophy-could-beat

#Royal Canadian Air Force
Canada Just Got Its First F-35 Fighter Jets. Will They Be Its Last?
https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/canada-just-got-first-f-35-fighter-jets-will-they-be-last-ps-102626

#Royal Canadian Air Force
Has Canada Cancelled the F-35? 16 Jets Committed
https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/e/canada-f-35-review-gripen/

#Royal Canadian Air Force
Canada's First F-35s Have Been Delivered. So Why Is the Purchase Still Under Review?
https://www.policyhawk.ca/p/canadas-first-f-35s-have-been-delivered

#Royal Canadian Air Force

RCAF to replace or upgrade nearly every fleet by 2033
https://www.vanguarddefence.ca/p/rcaf-to-replace-or-upgrade-nearly-every-fleet-by-2033

#Russia-Ukraine War #Indo-Pacific
Communications Slowdowns, Seven Vivaldi Insights, More Sanctions Relief Possible for Putin, Taiwan's Joint Command & Control.
https://mickryan.substack.com/p/communications-slowdowns-seven-vivaldi

#security
Prime Minister Carney launches The Plan for a Stronger Canada to strengthen sovereignty and build a more secure and prosperous future | Prime Minister of Canada
https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2026/10/29/prime-minister-carney-launches-plan-stronger-canada-strengthen
linked to: The Plan for a Stronger Canada - National Security for Canadians,
https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council/services/publications/plan-stronger-canada.html

Further:
Canada Releases New National Security Policy blog:
https://www.truenorthstrategicreview.ca/p/canada-releases-new-national-security

Defence in the National Security Plan
blog - https://philippelagasse.substack.com/p/defence-in-the-national-security

#security
Davos rocket or damp squib?
https://wesleywark.substack.com/p/davos-rocket-or-damp-squib
linked to:
A National Security Strategy for a New Age
https://www.cigionline.org/articles/a-national-security-strategy-for-a-new-age/

#strategy
Why Is Strategy So Difficult?
https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/2026/10/strategy-military-politics-war/689072/
A copy is available on request to RUSI(NS).

Odds and Sods

"Drones, Missiles, and the U.S. Munitions Shortage: The Role of Affordable Mass in a Taiwan Conflict", Centre for a New American Security, September 18 2026,
https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/drones-missiles-and-the-u-s-munitions-shortage

Government of Canada, Department of National Defence, News Release

October 28, 2026 – Victoria, British Columbia – National Defence / Canadian Armed Forces
"Canada hosts 28th ASEAN Regional Forum Heads of Defence Universities, Colleges, Institutions Meeting"

The Canadian Defence Academy hosted the 28th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum Heads of Defence Universities, Colleges, Institutions Meeting in Victoria, British Columbia, from October 20 to 23, 2026.

As a founding member of the ASEAN Regional Forum, Canada demonstrated its commitment to strengthening relationships with regional partners and supporting a free, open, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific by serving as host nation for the first time. The conference was co-hosted with the Philippines, reflecting the collaborative spirit that underpins the forum.

The annual meeting brought together senior leaders from professional military education institutions and defence organizations across the ASEAN Regional Forum to exchange perspectives, build relationships, and advance cooperation.

October 27, 2026 – Ottawa, Ontario – National Defence / Canadian Armed Forces
"Operation NANOOK-TATIGIIT Strengthens Whole-of-Government Crisis Response in the Arctic"

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), in collaboration with federal, territorial, municipal and Indigenous partners, conducted Operation NANOOK-TATIGIIT (Op NA-TA) from October 19 to 23, 2026 in Whitehorse, Yukon, to strengthen whole-of-government preparedness and crisis response in support of safety and security in the North.

Op NA-TA 26 brought together Public Safety Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canadian Coast Guard, the Canadian Red Cross, Indigenous Services Canada, the Yukon First Nations government and communities, alongside territorial and municipal authorities to exercise decision-making and crisis response in a northern environment. The 2026 scenario simulated a complex emergency threatening critical infrastructure and public safety in northern communities, requiring participants to coordinate response efforts, address emerging challenges, and make timely decisions under demanding conditions. This strengthened coordination, clarified roles and responsibilities, and enhanced preparedness for emergencies in the North.

Operation NANOOK is conducted throughout the year through a series of activities designed to strengthen the CAF's ability to operate in the Arctic and North alongside Indigenous communities, government partners, allies, and other stakeholders. Working closely with partners, the CAF leverages a whole-of-government approach to strengthen its presence, reach, mobility, and responsiveness in the region, advancing broader Government of Canada priorities and contributing to a secure region.

October 22, 2026 - Reykjavík, Iceland – Canadian Coast Guard
"Canadian Coast Guard strengthens North Atlantic cooperation at Reykjavík Summit"

As the coast guard of a key North Atlantic nation, the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) participated in the North Atlantic Coast Guard Forum Summit this week in Reykjavík, Iceland, to reaffirm Canada's leadership role in strengthening maritime security and cooperation across the Arctic and North Atlantic.
During the Summit, CCG Commissioner Kevin Brosseau signed a Cooperation Plan with the Icelandic Coast Guard to advance the organizations' longstanding partnership. The plan includes joint exercises and training, information sharing to strengthen maritime domain awareness, and cooperation on climate resilience and decarbonization. The two coast guards will also exchange best practices to support Arctic operations and maritime security.

Naval Association Canada (NAC) News, 16-29 October 2026, Selected Information

Canada :
Canada Is Building a Mega Port That Could Change Global Shipping

Canadian Forces School of Military Intelligence celebrates largest graduation parade in school history

Ceremonial First Poppy presented to Governor General of Canada

Irving Shipbuilding Provides Update on HMCS Fraser

Port of Vancouver records busiest cruise season with 1.4 million passenger visits

Why Canada Wants a Long-Range Strike Capability

The World:
Danish mine-clearance team returns from NATO deployment on Canadian ship

EU Imports Record 12.18 Million Tonnes of Russian Arctic LNG

France Seizes Another 'Shadow Fleet' Tanker; Russia Decries 'Piracy' and of course France's detention of tanker requires international condemnation — Russian diplomat

INS Sahyadri Reaches Vladivostok for India-Russia Naval Exercise INDRA 2026

Mounting war-time trade between Moscow and Beijing expands in the Arctic

Panama Canal Sets Record for Annual Tonnage Driven by Shifts in Trade

The engineering behind the world's largest electric ship

The Messy Geopolitics of the Far North: The Arctic Council

Ukrainian strikes blast Russian frigates at Novorossiysk

Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) International Outlook, 16-29 October, 2026
Selected Information

The World:
"I.M.F. Warns Mideast War Will Widen Gap Between Rich and Poor Countries"

Ethiopia / Eritrea: "Ethiopian troops enter town on border with Eritrea, stoking war fears"

European Union: "EU unveils new Arctic strategy with focus on security"

European Union / Russia: "EU sanctions shipyards and design bureaus key to Russia's nuclear submarine fleet"

France: "Cyberattack Hits Hundreds of Supermarket Refrigeration Systems in France"

Haiti: "Haitian gangs target foreign troops in biggest attack since force began operations"

Japan / United States: "Joint Japan-U.S. military drill set to break new ground"

Piracy: "Maritime Piracy in 2026 Fell to 1992 Levels Despite Somalia-Yemen Surge"

Russia / China / Japan: "Chinese delegation visits island disputed between Japan, Russia"

Russia / Ukraine: "Ukraine accuses SpaceX of crippling drone missions as ties with US worsen"

Saudi Arabia / United Kingdom: "Britain sends fighter jests to defend Saudi Arabia amid Houthi attacks"

South Korea: "South Korean Containership Completes Demonstration Arctic Voyage"

SAC Notes

OBSERVATION ON WORLD AFFAIRS

Issues to Watch
US midterms, will Trump try to declare an emergency to delay the in-person vote allegedly because of voter fraud. Will the courts intervene?

The formation of an Israeli coalition government after a near tie in Tuesday, 27 October 2026 elections. Will the Israeli Arab Parties support Gen Eisenkot's centre right party and replace Netanyahu ?
The Houthis have become a major threat across much of the Middle East. It is a proxy of the Iranian regime. Its missile and drone forces have proven formidable and a true disrupter to any peace efforts. Will they continue to attack? It appears they will continue to push toward their goals. It is expected that this violence will increase.

How far will Trump go to achieve trade agreements with Canada and Mexico? Others?

Will Xi face opposition in the fifth plenum (ongoing now) or will he enhance his control over the Party?

Ukraine has achieved momentum against Russia on the battlefield retaking more ground than Russia this past three months. Will Ukraine achieve the same in the long-distance war using massive numbers of long-range drones, with a raid of over 2 k drones against Russian targets?

O Canada
The self-inflicted wound of the Alberta Referendum is over with a majority supporting Alberta remaining in Canada, despite US and Russian interference in the process. It included the US State department meeting several times with separatist elements as well as the continued interference of the current US Ambassador, Pete Hoekstra.

Russia's disinformation campaign is almost a fixture; the US level of interference shows how far the current US administration is willing to go to disrupt our unity. Russia's bot farms met with an untimely end with Ukrainian strikes on data centres across Russia. The bots were silenced. Separatist messages seem to disappear as a result.

There have been approximately a dozen attacks against targets in Toronto and other locations usually against Jewish targets. Security forces are now certain that local criminals are being hired through the dark web. The main suspect appears to be the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is good that our security forces are able to understand the situation. It will be important for security forces to find those responsible. CSIS has stated that up to 700 Iranian "agents" may be in Canada. They have been active against the Iranian diaspora as well.
I was going to write about the Canadian Army re-organization and Inflection Point 2025. It is increasingly clear that the estimate may have been situated before consultation. It shows that

there is a lack of understanding of geography or history especially as it relates to the First and Second World Wars. This being said, I have access to some new documentation, interviews with the Army Commander, points from other organizations which made this much more complex than I thought. I am including the link to the Inflection Point 2025 for your reading pleasure. The next notes will feature these new views and sources. I hope to give a much better idea of the Army's way ahead. Like all reorganizations, there are good points and bad and this is no different but there are flaws that need to be addressed.

United States

The US is due to conduct the midterm election on 3 November 2026. The outcome of these elections will have a major effect on the state of the US one way or the other until at least January 2027 when the new members of the House and Senate are sworn in for the new Congress.

If the polls are correct, it is likely there will be a change in at least the House and possibly a change in leadership in those governing organs. The period in between the election results being sworn in could force the hand of the President. If the Democrats take both houses of Congress, Trump may feel pressured to do as much as he can in his time remaining. Certainly, his followers seem to be prone to listening to fabrications and half truths. It could mean a measure of violence across the US. Time will tell.

The greatest threat to US democracy is the rise of the "tech bros" who have donated millions of dollars toward the Republican campaign. The US does not have donation limits as Canada does. The problem is that such large donations have an inordinate effect on the election. What is more concerning is that people such as Peter Thiel and Elon Musk have made statements that would essentially end democracy in favour of some form of tech bro organization, the main authority on major efforts. Sir Winston Churchill famously stated that "democracy is the worst form of government…except for all the rest. The tech bros are a threat to democracy of the US and possibly the world. Too much money and living in a tech bubble obviously warps the mind. The US had a period before in the late 19th century with the railroad barons. Eventually these large corporations were broken up, such an option should be considered again. These people intend to do harm.

The US Navy has sent a third aircraft carrier strike group (CSG) to the Middle East. This is a further strain on a scarce resource, a US CSG. There are only 11 carriers plus nine assault carriers which can be used as a light carrier. The tempo of their operations has been high. We saw the USS Abraham Lincoln being kept on station for a prolonged period of time putting a major stress on the crew but also to the mechanical maintenance of the ship itself and other vessels in the CSG.

US Forces in Europe have also been subject to the Trump regime's inability to maintain the aim. US Army forces have been forced to prepare to deploy or have the deployment cancelled at the last moment. Currently, the US is reviewing its posture in Europe, as many as 25 k troops plus equipment may be returned to the US as part of this effort. The US air force finds itself in a similar situation. From personal past operations, I know this demoralizing to anyone. I do know that the US military is stretched due to the whims of the Administration and

its mercurial leader. Like all organizations, moves are time and resource intensive and emotionally draining for the military members and their families. It will have an effect on the capability of US military personnel.

Lastly, the US has offered a visa to the defeated Brazilian Presidential candidate, Flavio Bolsonaro. Mr. Bolsonaro fears that he would meet the fate of his father serving time in a Brazilian high security prison. He apparently left the country shortly after the announcement that Lula won. He apparently boarded an aircraft for Ecuador. Still, it appears "birds of a feather do flock together" when it comes to right wing "want to bees" such as Bolsonaro and Trump.

Moldova

On 23 October 2026, a Garan type drone entered Moldovan airspace and hit just short of inhabited Moldovan homes in the village of Kistelnita near the centre of the country. As a result, Moldova declared a Russian diplomat persona non grata and expelled him from the country. This is not the first time that drones have entered Moldovan airspace. On 15-16 October no less than four entered the airspace. The numbers of Russian incursions are increasing. Info provided by the Kyiv Post.

Moldova and Ukraine have signed an agreement whereby Moldova will manufacture drones for Ukraine and receive specialized training to bring Moldovan military forces toa higher state of training and readiness. Currently, they are also cooperating to keep Russian forces inside Transnistria under tight control. As mentioned in the previous notes, 80% of Transnistria's exports now go to the EU. Their previous leverage was power production using "free" Russian gas is now over so the enclave with a minority Russian population, is now in economic difficulties. Info found in the Ukraine Today but verified in Moldovan news as well.

The main point is that Russia's ability to create difficulties continues to diminish. The main reason for increased support for joining the EU is caused by the very real improvement in the Moldovan economy. Moldova has ramped up its efforts to meet EU standards. They intend to have most requirements complete by 2028 and be in discussions for full accession by 2030.

Georgia

The Georgia Dream Party is using the courts to try to outlaw the five opposition parties. These parties include the Coalition for Change, United National Movement, Strong Georgia, For Georgia and the Federalists. The main claim is that the parties should be disallowed as they will not recognize the legitimacy of the current government. The Georgia Dream party has cited specific incidents that are a product of demonstrations against the 2024 election which was noted for its election irregularities. Not surprisingly, the opposition protested.

The opposition continues to demonstrate despite an active crackdown by government security forces. It is expected to continue, perhaps more so as the Government tries to eliminate the opposition. What a favourable court decision will do will provide legal "top cover" for an increased crackdown by security services. Russia has remained out of Georgian affairs mainly

because the pro-Russian government seems to be adequately dealing with the situation. Russia controls about 20% of Georgian territory as a result of the 2008 war. Info from Georgia Today 26 October 2026.

Belarus

Belarus is walking a very fine line, seeming to support Russia at the same time avoiding fighting Ukraine directly. In 2022, Belarus allowed its territory to be used by Russia to attack Ukraine from the North into the Kyiv area. The Lukashenko regime saw the defeat and subsequent withdrawal of defeated Russian forces from the area surrounding Kyiv. It was not a good omen.

Since that time, the Belarus regime has skillfully avoided further direct confrontation with Ukraine and has supported Russia up to a point, but no further. Belarus has not mobilized although it did require males of military age to update their contact information, but no actual mobilization. Belarus security forces are only about 100 k of all types. Their Russian provided nuclear arsenal is still under Russian control Infrastructure is being upgraded so Russian trains could enter the country with little difficulty and routine joint exercises are conducted in Belarus with CSTO forces.

Belarus still provides radio repeaters to Russians on a case-by-case basis, but this on again off again system actually provides the Ukrainians warning. Ukraine admittedly has other ways of knowing but anything helps. Belarus assists Russia's influence actions against NATO and the EU by running an illegal immigrant system. This has largely been made ineffective by actions of NATO and the EU to thwart these attempts.

More puzzling is President Trump's attempts to improve relations with Belarus including the proposed lifting of sanctions so the US can purchase potash and also appear to be supporting a peace deal by releasing political prisoners to gain favour with the Trump regime.

Israel – Iran including Proxies

The main topic of this series of notes is the outcome or lack thereof , of the Israeli election on Tuesday, 27 October 2026. Although much of the counting will be over; it is expected that no one party will be able to form government on their own, thus a coalition will have to be formed. This could take months and depending on who can make this happen first will run the government. Indications to date seem to point toward a liberal approach at present but the right under Netanyahu could form a government with the support of right-wing parties. This would mean a return to conflict but probably at a higher level of violence. The Economist has estimated that Gen Eisenkot's coalition is estimated to include about 70 seats and although Likud has the largest actual number of seats they may only have enough for 50.from the email "The World in Brief" 28 October 2026. What will this mean for the ongoing conflict with Iran and its proxies? Unknown, but likely the new coalition would be more willing to end the conflict. The question is whether Iran is willing.

Gaza is garrisoned by two Israeli divisions covering the territory in Gaza to the "Yellow Line" There is an ongoing program to continue killing those Hamas operatives who participated in the 7 October 2023 attack. This is a difficult problem for the Israelis. Hamas still controls Gaza and is steadily eliminating opposition to its continued control over Gaza.

Israel is continuing a slow methodical withdrawal from Southern Lebanon. They have been destroying Hezbollah infrastructure in the occupied area. In a recent poll of Lebanese citizens nearly two thirds want Hezbollah weapons under the control of the central government. Is it likely that the Lebanese Army is willing to disarm Hezbollah even if violence is necessary? In the past, this proved unlikely thus this part of the conflict will likely continue.

The Houthis are more interested in attacking into the area of the UN recognized Government. They have also made major advances into South-Western Yemen including the Straits of Bab al Mandab thus cutting entry and exit to the Suez Canal. Saudi Arabia is also a major focus of the Houthis as well. The Houthis appear to be willing to inflict heavy damage on the Kingdom and are likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Israel appears to be on the backburner at this time.

Israel's air force is conducting practice attack runs against Iran. Will this continue? It is likely to continue until the formation of a new government.

Russia- Ukraine Conflict

The war continues unabated with both sides using massive numbers of drones and missiles on each other's infrastructure. The main difference is the type of target. Russia tends towards targets that are directed against the psychology of Ukrainians, hitting apartments and power infrastructure while Ukraine hammers oil and gas facilities and the infrastructure that supports it. More recently, Ukraine has added large storage centres and data centres. Ukraine also routinely hits military targets from the forward line of battle to key Russian infrastructure far in Russia's rear. At present, Russia has a slight advantage due to its ability to launch ballistic missiles as Ukraine does not have the interceptors to eliminate this particular problem.

There has been a level of cooperation and that is the continued program of prisoner exchanges. 270 prisoners from both sides were released on Thursday, 23 October 2026.

There is no front as such; combat of various sorts can occur over 100 kms either side of the line of contact between the two warring parties. Recently, we have seen the use of large drones airlifting unmanned ground vehicles ten kms into the rear. These drones attacked Russian positions with little notice catching various positions unprepared for the mechanical onslaught. Various types of unmanned aerial vehicles have also increased their range and lethality including use of AI tools to ensure a drone cannot be jammed from its main mission.

The battlefield has changed and not in favour of the Russians. According to multiple sources, Russia has had casualty rates of ten Russians killed or seriously wounded to one Ukrainian. Russia has now incurred 1.581 M troops killed, wounded, captured and missing since February 2022. These year-to-date Russian casualties have reached over 350 k and are expected to

exceed 50+k in October 2026. At the same time, Russians have steadily lost ground with Ukraine now recapturing more ground than they have lost in recent months. The Russian summer offensive is a defeat.
Russia has been unable to mobilize effectively at this point. Although Russia has considerably more men, there are issues that may not be able to be overcome. The first mobilization was highly unpopular. Hundreds of thousands of men left the country. The number of casualties per month has exceeded new recruit figures. The prison population has been decimated and is no longer a source of consequence. While the manpower pool is available, there are growing signs that Russia is not prepared for another mobilization. There is a very real fear that it would lead to massive unrest across the country.

While Russia appears to be badly hit and their ability to continue the war is doubtful mainly due to the economy which is essentially broken. Ukraine is in a similar situation but has allies; Russia does not. Russia has been blessed by a corrupt US regime which has provided a lifeline to Russia by dropping sanctions and making the diesel agreement. The question now is which country collapses first. It could be either, but Russia has no backup; Ukraine does.

China
The Chinese language commentators have suggested that this meeting may be more exciting than anticipated. Most have been reasonable sources of information within China, more importantly they are able to read the press in its original language. In China, there is a distinct difference between the Chinese version and the English versions of the same story, so with that in mind, please read the story below.

The question is whether President Xi survives in his various positions after the Fifth plenum of the 20th Congress of the Communist Chinese Party. Apparently there is a possibility that there is considerable opposition to Xi's overall direction of the CCP and its role in the world. There are numerous factions in the CCP itself particularly amongst the party elites. However, there is apparently a reform coalition of factions that are more oriented towards Deng Xiaoping. The current leader of the anti-Xi group is Hun Chunhua.

Hu Chunhua is relatively young at 63, born on 1 April 1963 in Hubei Province to a farming family. His career can be largely judged as a technocrat as opposed to a dogmatic member of the CCP. He topped his government exams, the Gaokao when he achieved the top score in the country. His first posting was Tibet. He followed this up with increasingly more prominent and responsible positions Tibet was followed by Hubei, Inner Mongolia, and Guangdong followed positions within the central Government. He became vice Premier in 2018 a position he held until 2022 when he was demoted when the Hu Jintao faction was largely removed from the politburo. He was considered at one point to be one of the possible leadership candidates post XI. When he was demoted and removed. It does explain his possible animosity towards Xi.

Xi is expected to be charged with seven charges including:

a. Creation of military chaos weakening armed forces stopping reforms. Requirements for loyalty over competence;

b. Constitutional changes allowing for more than two terms;
c. Staging a coup during the 20th Party Congress such as removing the Hu Jintao faction;
d. Poor handling of the Covid 19 file;
e. Xi's reforms were a distraction allowing a build up a graft etc for his family and friends and allies;
f. Foreign policy mistakes such as the wolf warrior program and showing teeth rather than simply growing power quietly;
g. The weaponizing of the anti-corruption program against rivals.

The bottom line is, Xi may be forced to step down from several positions, and it is likely his third term will become unpleasant. It should be noted that President Xi may surprise everyone and continue with greater control. As always, time will tell.

COMMENTARY ON CENTRAL AFRICA AND AFRICA-WIDE STRATEGIC INFLUENCE ASSESSMENT

SUBJECT: Strategic and Security Developments Across Africa, 23–29 October 2026, with Essential Earlier Context

REFERENCES

A. Open-source reporting and institutional documentation available through 29 October 2026, including African Union Commission and SADC communiqués; Government of Canada and Global Affairs Canada; United States Treasury and State Department; WHO, CDC and ECDC outbreak reports; Reuters, Associated Press, BBC, Al Jazeera, Financial Times, The Star (Kenya), African regional media, France 24, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Africa Intelligence, Russian and Ethiopian official communications, and contemporaneous RT summit coverage.

B. Independent assessment based on source comparison, documented institutional actions, reported operational developments and commercial data. Official assertions, projected investment, equipment orders, confirmed deliveries, allegations and analytical judgments are differentiated; a repeated government claim is not counted as independent corroboration.

PURPOSE

A. To assess the security, diplomatic, economic, technological and humanitarian developments of greatest strategic consequence between 23 and 29 October 2026, retaining earlier events only where they explain developments in the current period.

B. To evaluate Russia, China, the United States, Canada and Africa's own strategic choices using measurable indicators of influence, and to identify practical implications for Canadian engagement without assuming African states form a uniform geopolitical bloc.

C. To distinguish what has actually occurred from what is proposed, claimed or anticipated, and to provide a concise, decision-useful assessment supported by explicit confidence judgments.

I. EXECUTIVE ASSESSMENT

A. The most important diplomatic development was the Third Russia–Africa Summit in Moscow, 28–29 October. Russia reported delegations from 48 African countries, 22 led by heads of state; the number is an organizer-reported attendance figure, not a measure of support for Russia's positions on Ukraine. The African Union (AU) independently confirmed senior participation, including AU Chairperson Évariste Ndayishimiye and AU Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf. The event gave Moscow significant political visibility while illuminating African governments' willingness to keep strategic options open.

B. The clearest new institutional result was the 28 October African Union Commission–Russia Action Plan for 2027–2029, covering 19 fields, including peace and security, agriculture, infrastructure, education, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and early warning. SADC also signed a separate cooperation framework with Moscow. Neither a broad agenda nor a signature establishes financing or implementation; the AU action plan expressly creates no obligations under international law.

C. Russia combined diplomatic presentation with tangible and proposed deals. Ghana's GIADEC and RUSAL agreed to pursue bauxite mining and domestic alumina refining, while Ethiopia announced an acquisition of 12 Su-35 aircraft and plans for four S-400 batteries. The Ethiopian numbers require care: Reuters reported that the Russian state arms exporter confirmed an initial delivery of two Su-35s. The remaining aircraft and S-400 systems must not be represented as delivered and operational without further proof.

D. The immediate Central African security picture was defined by new American sanctions against Rwanda's Ministry of Defence and a military-linked financial institution over alleged support for M23 in eastern Congo, and by an extraordinary Bundibugyo-virus Ebola outbreak. The CDC recorded 10,141 confirmed Congolese cases and 4,928 deaths as of 26 October. Public health, military security, cross-border movement and institutional capacity are now inseparable operational concerns.

E. China's influence remains broader in commercial scale than Russia's. Recent reporting put Chinese manufacturing investment in Africa near US$8 billion in 2025 and China–Africa trade around US$348 billion; Putin reported Russia–Africa trade above US$27 billion. China's October green-energy research forum added university and scientific partnerships to its manufacturing and infrastructure position. Russia currently appears more effective in selected security relationships and high-visibility diplomatic messaging than in continent-wide economic reach.

F. The principal analytical conclusion is therefore differentiated: Russian strategic access is expanding; Chinese economic depth remains much greater; the United States retains sanctions, financial and diplomatic leverage; Canada has substantial expertise and an established Africa

Strategy but must demonstrate measurable implementation. African governments negotiate among these options for their own national and continental priorities. No available evidence supports the proposition that Russia is now on the favourable side of every African country.

Confidence Assessment: High for official summit, sanctions and outbreak records; Moderate to High for observed direction of external engagement; Moderate for projected influence and implementation.

II. RUSSIA–AFRICA SUMMIT: ACCESS, AGREEMENTS AND LIMITATIONS

A. The Moscow summit was co-chaired by President Vladimir Putin and Burundi's President Évariste Ndayishimiye, serving as African Union chairperson. The 48-country and 22-leader figures originated with Kremlin aide Yury Ushakov and broadly align with contemporary independent accounts. Participation exceeds the 17 leaders reported for 2023 but remains below the 43 reported in 2019. These figures demonstrate access and convening power, not a continent-wide endorsement of Moscow's foreign policy.

B. Putin's public messaging stressed sovereignty, a multipolar order, African representation in global institutions, agriculture, energy, education and technological cooperation. RT footage supplied by the author clearly documents those broadcast themes. Those images establish the content of Russia's public diplomatic presentation, but not the delivery of the programmes or the independent agreement of all delegates. The intended audience includes African officials, domestic Russian viewers and external governments considering their own African engagement.

C. The AU Commission's signed 2027–2029 framework creates channels across 19 areas: security and counterterrorism; digital and space technologies; AI-enabled early-warning systems; health; education; food systems; transport; investment and cultural exchanges. SADC's separate framework widens the institutional network. Institutional continuity matters because technical working groups and recurring professional contacts may outlast a leader or a particular summit. Whether these arrangements change African policy choices will depend on resources and outcomes rather than their breadth of language.

D. African leaders did not simply receive Russian proposals. AU representatives emphasized Agenda 2063, value-added production, industrial capacity, capital, skills and sovereign development choices. Kenyan President William Ruto similarly highlighted Africa's role in factories, laboratories, research institutions and international markets. The political common ground between Russia and African delegates should not obscure their separate interests: Moscow seeks influence and markets; African partners seek investment, security and negotiating leverage.

E. Putin reported more than 18 million tonnes of Russian grain supplied to Africa in 2025, about 13 million tonnes in the first nine months of 2026, and approximately 40,000 African students in Russian institutions. These organizer-reported quantities indicate substantive areas for verification. Russian agricultural exports and education can build long-term relationships,

yet scholarships, fertilizer and grain do not by themselves prove political alignment or displace larger commercial relationships with China and Europe.

F. Assessment. Russia secured a diplomatic success and additional institutional entry points. The intelligence test over the next 12–24 months should be funded programmes, actual attendance at working-level meetings, delivered equipment, scholarships, operating facilities, trade growth and African institutional assessments of value received. A summit declaration without implementation is political signalling, not completed influence.

Confidence Assessment: High for the event and AU/SADC signatures; Moderate for Russian numerical claims and expected institutional effects.

III. RUSSIAN SECURITY INFLUENCE AND ETHIOPIA'S DEFENCE ACQUISITION

A. Russia's security network remains particularly visible in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and the Central African Republic. Assistance can involve advisers, equipment, training, intelligence liaison and Africa Corps personnel. These channels create government access, but external military support cannot substitute for civilian security, effective administration or resolution of insurgent grievances. The reported Kidal operation earlier in October is relevant background, not a new 23–29 October military victory; retaking a city does not establish enduring control of surrounding territory.

B. Ethiopia's 28 October announcement was a more immediate capability development. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed referred to 12 Su-35 fighters and four prospective S-400 batteries, but Reuters quoted Rosoboronexport confirming the first batch of two Su-35 aircraft delivered that day. Some Ethiopian official reporting used language implying all 12 had arrived. The conservative, corroborated finding is an announced 12-aircraft programme, at least two confirmed initial deliveries, and no verified operational S-400 deployment as of the assessment date.

C. The aircraft may improve Ethiopia's air capability, while future air-defence integration would require trained personnel, sensors, secure communications, maintenance and operational readiness. Their strategic effects must be assessed in a Horn of Africa already facing tensions around Tigray and Eritrea. A procurement does not prove an intention to attack neighbours; neither can it be assumed politically neutral to neighbouring governments evaluating their own security positions.

D. The Ethiopia–Russia relationship is also expanding into discussions of nuclear energy, healthcare and trade. Prime Minister Abiy and Putin met during the summit. The existence of high-level discussions is confirmed; proposed nuclear facilities or systems should not be described as financed and operational. Defence equipment, energy projects and training have different implementation timelines and should be tracked independently.

E. In the Central African Republic, Africa Intelligence reported that two pro-Russian figures were removed from the presidential summit delegation shortly before departure. Its public

summary confirms the reporting claim but not the underlying motive. The episode is a reminder that Russia-linked political and security networks are not necessarily unified, and that local factions may negotiate their own interests. It does not demonstrate a rupture in Bangui–Moscow relations.

F. Assessment. Moscow's security relationships confer influence that is disproportionate to the scale of its African trade in selected states. Yet its comparative advantage should be measured against operational performance, civilian protection, logistics, training and institutional dependence—not by counting governments that attend a summit or sign a security memorandum.

Confidence Assessment: High for Ethiopia's announcement and the corroborated two-aircraft delivery; Moderate for future acquisitions and the durability of Sahel and Central African security relationships; Low for motives behind the CAR delegation adjustment.

IV. RUSSIA'S ECONOMIC OFFER: GHANA, FOOD SECURITY AND ENERGY

A. Ghana's agreement with RUSAL is the summit's clearest identified new industrial proposal. GIADEC and the Russian producer agreed to create two majority-RUSAL joint ventures targeting the Nyinahin bauxite deposit, with planned annual mining capacity of up to five million tonnes and an alumina refinery capable of 1.2 million tonnes. Reuters and the company's published statement agree on the core figures. The proposal reflects Ghana's goal of retaining more value domestically rather than exporting only raw ore.

B. The agreement is not a commissioned refinery. Financing, environmental approvals, power supply, transport links, procurement, construction and equity terms remain critical. RUSAL also has a commercial incentive: diversification of alumina supplies after disruptions associated with the Ukraine war and changes in international sourcing. A project can advance Ghana's industrial aims and Russian supply security simultaneously; its distribution of value must be judged by actual outcomes, not rhetoric.

C. Agriculture provides Russia with another practical entry point. Grain and fertilizer supply address immediate food-security requirements; longer-term resilience requires local processing, irrigation, roads, storage, electricity and agricultural productivity. Moscow's offers may therefore gain political traction where partners regard Western development programmes as slow or conditional. Nonetheless, dependency on a single supplier can expose buyers to price, shipping and sanctions risks.

D. Energy cooperation includes Russian nuclear expertise and proposals for additional projects in African countries. Nuclear agreements require the strongest separation of expression of interest, feasibility work, finance, regulatory approval, construction and operating status. Claims that a country has secured a future reactor or floating power facility are not evidence that electricity will be produced within the relevant assessment horizon.

E. Assessment. Russia is attempting to convert political access into visible project pipelines. Ghana's value-added aluminium proposal and Ethiopia's defence arrangement merit more attention than generalized goodwill statements. A rigorous measure of progress is whether Russia turns these announced relationships into functioning infrastructure while African partners retain effective negotiating authority.

Confidence Assessment: High for the Ghana agreement and proposed capacities; Moderate for financing, commercial gains and proposed energy projects.

V. CHINA: THE MORE EMBEDDED COMMERCIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMPETITOR

A. China remains the far larger commercial participant in Africa among the two non-Western powers most emphasized in the summit debate. Recent Financial Times reporting put direct Chinese investment in African manufacturing near US$8 billion in 2025 and China–Africa trade at roughly US$348 billion. These are not interchangeable indicators—annual investment, accumulated capital and trade turnover measure different activities—but collectively they indicate a structural economic relationship far broader than Russia's reported US$27 billion in trade.

B. Chinese engagement is shifting further from extraction and construction into factories producing medical supplies, textiles, steel, glass, solar products and consumer goods. Manufacturing can create employment, technical skills and domestic supply chains, although announced investments are not equivalent to completed facilities and benefits depend on wages, energy costs, procurement, market access and contractual terms. Some expansion also reflects pressures inside China, including industrial overcapacity and weaker profit margins.

C. The 23–25 October China–Africa green-energy forum in Jinan illustrates Beijing's complementary institutional strategy. Organizers and Kenyan reporting identify participants from numerous countries and agreements between Shandong Jianzhu University and five African organizations in Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria. Proposed cooperation concerns renewable energy, storage, hydrogen, low-carbon buildings, researchers and training. The presence of Canadian academic expertise among speakers shows that professional scientific networks often cut across geopolitical categories.

D. These research memoranda must be evaluated through funded laboratories, joint publications, researcher exchanges, technology transfer and practical energy access. Nevertheless, educational institutions create long-lived networks that can be more durable than summit rhetoric. The pattern also responds to African requests for skills and domestic industrial participation, making it potentially attractive even where governments retain different political orientations.

E. China's influence is not without constraints. Concentrated processing and technology supply can create dependencies, while power shortages, debt servicing, contract enforcement and labour concerns can limit national benefits. African states may therefore welcome Chinese

investment while simultaneously seeking alternatives from Canada, Japan, Europe, the United States, India and Gulf investors.
F. Assessment. Russia has achieved impressive diplomatic visibility in the current reporting period; China retains greater commercial depth and an increasingly diversified industrial and scientific presence. Treating both as an undifferentiated opposing bloc would conceal major differences in scale, instruments and African perceptions.

Confidence Assessment: High for the observed scale of Chinese trade and the forum; Moderate for announced project completion and the long-term effect of educational partnerships.

VI. EASTERN CONGO AND RWANDA: SANCTIONS, ARMED GROUPS AND MINERAL CORRIDORS

A. On 28 October the United States sanctioned Rwanda's Ministry of Defence and Zigama Credit and Savings Society, alleging involvement in assistance to the M23 movement and its associated political network in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Treasury and State Department announcements establish the action and Washington's grounds; they do not remove the need to differentiate legal designation, intelligence allegations and independent battlefield observations.

B. The United States alleges that Rwandan military elements supplied personnel, weapons, training and logistical support to M23. Rwanda denies supporting the movement and cites its own security concerns, including the presence of hostile armed actors. United Nations expert findings and independent reporting have documented links that support substantial concern, but disputed claims about individual operations require specific attribution. Washington's mediation efforts and the previous peace framework have not yet produced reliable compliance or civilian safety.

C. Armed conflict affects eastern Congo's mineral resources, commercial roads, taxation, population movements and access to humanitarian aid. The significance of mineral deposits extends beyond who owns a mine: transport corridors, armed taxation, cross-border trade, refining and market access shape control over value. The sanctions may raise costs for designated institutions without automatically altering the battlefield incentives of armed movements.

D. The strategic issue for Canada and allied partners is not simply sanctions severity. Effectiveness requires monitoring military activity, financing channels, humanitarian access, compliance mechanisms and verifiable changes in civilian security. Neither US financial pressure nor regional diplomatic declarations substitute for implementation by the states and armed parties directly involved.

E. Assessment. Eastern Congo remains an immediate security and humanitarian priority. The new sanctions are a concrete American policy action, but durable stabilization requires enforceable commitments, restrictions on armed-group financing and effective border and civilian-protection arrangements.

Confidence Assessment: High for the sanctions and continuing insecurity; Moderate for their deterrent effect and the prospects for lasting settlement.

VII. DRC EBOLA: A STRATEGIC HUMANITARIAN SECURITY EMERGENCY

A. The Bundibugyo-virus Ebola outbreak is among the most urgent immediate threats identified in this reporting period. WHO reported 9,704 confirmed cases and 4,687 deaths across eight DRC provinces as of 20 October in its 23 October update. The CDC's later 26 October reporting recorded 10,141 confirmed cases and 4,928 confirmed deaths in DRC, with a wider five-country total of 10,172 confirmed cases and 4,932 deaths. Differences reflect reporting dates, geographic scope and continuing data reconciliation—not separate outbreaks to be added together.

B. Severe transmission in eastern Congo is intensified by conflict, displacement, overstretched facilities, difficulties tracing contacts, delayed treatment and community mistrust. The WHO reported high numbers of deaths occurring outside treatment facilities. Cases associated with cross-border travel have been reported in Kenya and Nigeria; earlier imported cases in Uganda and France are included in cumulative CDC counts, but cumulative totals do not indicate active transmission in all those countries on 29 October.

C. A vaccine trial against Bundibugyo disease began in October, according to European public-health reporting. Trial initiation is promising but does not establish that an effective approved vaccine is available. Regional authorities must therefore continue relying on surveillance, isolation, contact tracing, safe care, community trust and timely communication. International assistance cuts or disrupted logistics may erode this capacity precisely when the caseload is high.

D. For a security committee, the outbreak is not a secondary health story: it can disrupt trade corridors, undermine public confidence, challenge border management and reduce military or civilian access to affected communities. Conversely, heavy-handed restrictions may interfere with care and cooperation if not based on sound epidemiology. Effective measures must be coordinated with local populations and health authorities.

E. Assessment. A combined humanitarian, health-security and governance response is warranted. Reliable source dating is essential: official case definitions and counts should be cited as of their reporting date, and projections should be explicitly labelled rather than presented as current facts.

Confidence Assessment: High for WHO/CDC reported counts and the outbreak's regional dimensions; Moderate for near-term trajectory and the effect of clinical trials.

VIII. REGIONAL SECURITY AND GOVERNANCE: ALGERIA, TANZANIA, SUDAN AND NORTH AFRICA

A. Algeria announced on 26 October parliamentary authorization for a deployment of forces to Madama in northern Niger to protect shared energy and economic interests. Reuters reported

the decision and Algeria's emphasis on the proposed Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline. No reliable public details established actual troop numbers, arrival dates or the eventual mandate. The authorization is important because overseas military operations have historically been unusual for Algeria and because the move highlights African—not merely external—strategic calculations.

B. Niger's domestic military-led government, Sahel insurgency and strained relationships with neighbours complicate the context. Energy infrastructure offers economic opportunity but is vulnerable to insecurity and regional political mistrust. The intended Algerian mission should be assessed against Nigerien consent, operational limits, commercial protection and escalation risks, not assumed to be part of a Russian proxy confrontation.

C. On 28 October Amnesty International reported continuing repression and misuse of counterterrorism laws in Tanzania following the 2025 post-election crisis. Independent reporting cited a government inquiry recording 518 deaths, and families continued seeking accountability. Tanzanian authorities reject allegations of systematic abuse and insist they are preserving order. The relevant current development is the renewed rights assessment, not a new election or newly confirmed casualty event in the present period.

D. Sudan's humanitarian crisis remains acute. Human Rights Watch's 26 October review of the October 2025 fall of El Fasher documented grave abuses and the lasting consequences for displaced civilians. The anniversary is relevant because it demonstrates unresolved accountability, the destruction of civilian systems and the difficulty of coordinated international response. Claims about outside suppliers and contractors require specific evidence rather than assumptions from diplomatic attendance.

E. Africa Intelligence reported limited new indications of Morocco's engagement with eastern Libyan authorities and two pro-Russian figures removed from the Central African Republic's summit delegation. These subscription-restricted leads are useful monitoring indicators but insufficient, on their own, to establish the motives for personnel changes or the scope of military arrangements. Gulf-state, Turkish, Japanese and European relationships also show that continental competition is not reducible to Washington, Beijing and Moscow.

F. Assessment. The period's regional developments are diverse: an unusual Algerian security authorization, Tanzanian accountability concerns, Sudan's protracted humanitarian emergency and contested influence networks in North and Central Africa. They should not be compressed into one causal explanation of Russian expansion. National institutions and local conflicts remain the primary units of analysis.

Confidence Assessment: High for the Algerian authorization, human-rights reports and documented Sudanese abuses; Moderate to Low for restricted-source political leads and projected regional effects.

IX. UNITED STATES, EUROPE AND OTHER PARTNERS: DIFFERENT INSTRUMENTS

A. The United States maintains financial, diplomatic, security and commercial capabilities that Russia cannot replicate at equivalent scale. Its new Rwanda sanctions show a readiness to employ institutional financial pressure even while seeking regional diplomatic solutions. Washington also pursues access to critical minerals and diversified supply chains; the success of that approach depends on financing, local processing, jobs, governance and stable markets, not simply securing raw exports.

B. Assistance and commercial finance serve different functions. Manufacturing investment does not replace Ebola surveillance, humanitarian access or institutional assistance. Abrupt or poorly coordinated reductions in health and development support may create reputational and security openings for other partners, but such outcomes should be demonstrated rather than assumed. African governments evaluate the reliability and consistency of all partners against practical requirements.

C. Europe retains deep trade, development-finance, infrastructure and educational connections across Africa, although colonial history and contemporary policy disputes affect public perceptions in some countries. Japan's educational projects, Gulf investment and India's technical relationships offer alternatives. A realistic strategic comparison must therefore avoid depicting Africa as an exclusive contest among three outside powers.

D. The broader international energy environment—including reported accommodations involving Russian diesel exports—can affect sanctions credibility and African import costs. Yet no firm causal connection has been shown between a particular diesel arrangement and the recent Russia–Africa institutional agreements. This subject is accordingly treated as background, not a central new African development.

E. Assessment. American and European influence remains substantial but must increasingly be judged through implementation, responsiveness and consistency. A security-centred view alone undervalues the importance of finance, commercial technology, health cooperation, education and African domestic industrial objectives.

X. CANADA: FROM AN ESTABLISHED AFRICA STRATEGY TO MEASURABLE RESULTS

A. Canada's Africa Strategy, launched in March 2025, provides a coherent framework for stronger diplomacy, trade diversification, development finance, peace and security, education, critical minerals and support for African-led development. Its existence is not evidence of implementation at sufficient scale. The analytical task is to measure completed programmes and durable relationships rather than compare policy announcements with another country's summit publicity.

B. On 13 October Ambassador Annika Allman presented her credentials to the African Union Commission. Although earlier than the principal reporting window, that meeting provides useful baseline context: the AU and Canada discussed industrialization, capital access,

regional integration and investment-led development. Canada has complementary experience in engineering, responsible mining, agriculture, financial services, research and public institutions. These capabilities could support both Canadian commercial interests and Africa's demand for domestic value addition.

C. Russian and Chinese examples highlight different competitive pressures. Moscow has created a broad AU action plan, secured a high-profile summit and announced specific military and industrial cooperation. Beijing operates at far greater commercial scale and is broadening scientific and manufacturing networks. Neither model should be imported wholesale into Canadian policy; Canada's potential advantage is trusted execution, transparent finance and local technical capacity.

D. Canada should distinguish four stages in every initiative: diplomatic contact; negotiated and funded commitment; completed and functioning project; and sustained local benefit. A programme reporting only the first two stages should not be equated with a partner's delivered aircraft, operating factory or trained technical cohort. Conversely, a high-profile Russian announcement should not outrank an operating Canadian-supported project merely because it receives more media coverage.

E. Practical priorities include identifying African-led investment opportunities, supporting bankable processing and infrastructure projects, expanding skills partnerships, reducing administrative friction and demonstrating outcomes with agreed metrics. A small number of well-executed projects with African ownership may yield greater credibility than a much larger set of unfunded memoranda. Stronger AU, regional and bilateral coordination can avoid fragmented Canadian effort.

F. Assessment. Canada is not absent from Africa; neither does the evidence support claiming that it has lost the entire continent to Russia. The credible concern is that Canada may lose opportunities if financing, approvals and delivery lag behind partners able to translate relationships into observable results. The remedy is practical implementation, not theatrical imitation.

Confidence Assessment: High for the strategy and documented AU engagement; Moderate regarding Canada's relative influence and the expected results of prospective initiatives.

XI. AFRICAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY AND THE MEASUREMENT OF INFLUENCE

A. The AU's summit messaging was consistent with its earlier engagement with Canada: industrialization, infrastructure, regional markets, skills, value-added mineral processing and greater authority in global institutions. African leaders may seek security assistance from Russia, financing from China, trade with Europe and training from Canada without regarding those relationships as mutually exclusive. Such combinations are often an exercise of agency rather than evidence of incoherent alignment.

B. Strategic autonomy is practical rather than rhetorical. It depends on the ability to negotiate contracts, audit public debt, regulate mineral projects, protect intellectual property, generate reliable electricity, retain technical talent and enforce terms without becoming dependent on a single foreign supplier. This applies equally to Russian arms maintenance, Chinese industrial financing, Western development grants and commercial exports.
C. For intelligence purposes, indicators of durable influence should be weighted: implemented treaties and institutional access; funds disbursed; trade structure; jobs and processing capacity; delivered equipment and maintenance arrangements; local public acceptance; and retained African decision-making power. Attendance numbers and media prominence are weaker indicators unless connected to measurable subsequent behaviour.

D. Assessment. The continent is not a prize transferred from one external power to another. Regional security threats and development priorities shape African choices, and governments are increasingly able to compare different offers. Stronger external engagement can support autonomy where it builds domestic capacity; it can undermine it where financing, supply chains or security systems become exclusive dependencies.

Confidence Assessment: High regarding the diversification of partnerships and AU priorities; Moderate regarding the resilience of individual national strategies.

XII. IMPLICATIONS AND PRIORITY INDICATORS FOR CANADA AND ALLIED PARTNERS

A. Russia: distinguish attendance and signature from delivery. Monitor whether the AU and SADC frameworks generate funded projects, recurring technical exchanges, food and fertilizer supply arrangements, functioning energy initiatives, and further confirmed military deliveries. Specific security outcomes in the Sahel should be tested against civilian safety and sustainable government control rather than political declarations.

B. China: monitor operating manufacturing facilities, local employment, actual value added, university research outputs and concentration of processing technologies. China's depth makes it a benchmark for industrial execution, not a single model that Canada must copy. Track whether African governments diversify their suppliers and secure enforceable benefits.

C. DRC and Rwanda: evaluate changes in M23 activity, sanctions compliance, cross-border financing, humanitarian access and civilian protection. DRC Ebola: track weekly official figures, geographic spread, treatment access, contact follow-up and clinical trial findings. Military and health intelligence should share relevant operational findings without confusing public-health surveillance with security targeting.

D. Canada: implement a concise results scorecard reporting contracts financed, projects completed, trade and investment mobilized, African technical personnel trained, domestic processing built and partnerships sustained. Decisions on which sectors to enter should follow African demand, commercial feasibility, governance conditions and an explicit assessment of reputational risk.

E. Regional priorities: watch the actual Algerian deployment to Niger, accountability developments in Tanzania, civilian protection in Sudan, and the evolving role of Gulf and other external partners. Subscription-restricted allegations and media-only claims should remain collection requirements until corroborated.

F. Assessment. Canada and its partners require a less announcement-driven, more implementation-based picture of African strategic competition. The decisive difference between an agreement and influence is whether African institutions and communities can identify tangible, sustained benefits.

XIII. OVERALL CONFIDENCE ASSESSMENT

A. High confidence: official AU/SADC summit documentation, the existence of the Russia–Ghana agreement, United States sanctions on Rwandan institutions, Algeria's deployment authorization, and WHO/CDC outbreak reporting within their stated dates and case definitions.

B. Moderate to High confidence: broader trends in Russia's diplomatic and selected security relationships, China's comparative commercial reach, and the AU's consistent economic-development priorities. Comparisons use differing indicators and must not confuse trade turnover with investment stocks or political attendance.

C. Moderate confidence: projected implementation of new cooperation plans, future military deliveries and facilities, the effect of sanctions, and the success of proposed Canadian initiatives. Lower confidence attaches to motivations inferred from paywalled political reporting and to uncorroborated assertions by governments or broadcast outlets.

D. Methodological qualification: high confidence in the existence of a statement or agreement is not high confidence in its promised results. This memorandum intentionally excludes several older or less material topics from the earlier assessment to preserve analytical focus on 23–29 October.

XIV. CONCLUSION AND ANALYST'S OBSERVATION

A. CHINA. China's extensive commercial activity, near-US$8-billion annual manufacturing investment in 2025, major trade volume and expanding scientific relationships give it greater structural economic depth in Africa than Russia. The relevant assessment is not that Chinese influence is permanent, but that displacing embedded supply chains requires years of investment, credible competition and African consent.

B. UNITED STATES. The United States retains powerful financial, diplomatic and commercial instruments. Sanctions against Rwandan institutions demonstrate its willingness to use these instruments in a regional conflict. American credibility will nevertheless depend on consistent partnerships, implementable financing and a balance between mineral access, public health and African domestic development needs.

C. RUSSIA. Moscow's October summit produced visible diplomatic gains, a wide-ranging AU framework, a SADC agreement and identifiable Ethiopian and Ghanaian initiatives. Its political access and selected security relationships have expanded, but its trade remains much smaller than China's and its announcements still require implementation. The evidence does not substantiate the assertion that Russia has secured every African government's favourable alignment.

D. CANADA. Canada possesses a credible Africa Strategy, professional expertise and long-standing diplomatic and development relationships. The outstanding question is not whether Canada has stated the right objectives, but whether those objectives lead to functioning ventures, technical training, value-added production and sustained African partnerships quickly enough to matter. Canada should be evaluated by execution, not by the volume of communiqué language.

E. AFRICA. African states and institutions seek sovereign choices, more industrial value retained at home, modern infrastructure, health resilience, capital access and reliable security. Their decisions are varied and frequently transactional. The most durable external influence is likely to be earned by partners who improve African capabilities while respecting national autonomy, rather than by those who merely secure political endorsements.

F. ANALYST'S OBSERVATION. One may reasonably assess that Canada should move beyond a predominantly declaratory phase of African engagement and adopt a more proactive, measurable implementation posture. Russia is investing political effort and building institutional access; China continues to finance and embed commercial and scientific relationships. These developments do not require Canada to mimic either power, but they do argue against remaining content with well-phrased strategies unaccompanied by visible outcomes. A focused programme of bankable infrastructure, responsible mineral processing, education, research and practical financing—designed with African partners—would better serve Canadian interests and African development priorities than diplomatic language alone.

G. OVERALL ASSESSMENT. Africa's international position is defined by selective engagement, not exclusive alignment. The strategic contest is increasingly about who delivers functioning institutions, reliable commercial capacity, public security and domestic value. Canada still has a credible opportunity to contribute, but opportunities not developed into effective partnerships can narrow over time.

Overall Confidence Assessment: Moderate to High for verified developments and observed strategic trends; Moderate for their future consequences and the comparative durability of influence.

COMMENTARY ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND SERBIA

Israeli election result is top of the list. While it will take days, if not weeks, to finalize, the significant gains by the Arab parties will be a key factor - even if only to coalesce anti-Arab sentiment. Even if Netanyahu can remain in power, shifts in the weight and power of the various political parties in the Knesset will have an impact on the complex regional dynamic.

Also noteworthy was the Serbian election and the solid victory of the Student List over Aleksandar Vučić and his United Serbia party. What will happen after the technically leaderless SL forms a government - such as the relationships with Russia and China vs the EU - is hard to predict. More to follow on this one.

Recent attacks in the Black Sea on commercial shipping in the territorial waters of NATO Allies has prompted a meeting of Defence Ministers from Bulgaria, Romania and Türkiye and a recent French deployment of a Dassault Atlantique 2 maritime patrol aircraft. The targeting of Ukraine's grain exports in the Danube river delta and the Black Sea has significantly increased this year with projected impacts for Ukraine and also in North Africa and Europe. There is a general agreement that these actions must not be normalized, and NATO allies are working on ways to counter destabilization - all the while Russia seeks to define and approach the thresholds of hybrid warfare. The "how" to counter these threats remains complex.

Finally, just a few comments on the Houthis and the Red Sea corridor. Commercial traffic through the Red Sea has been steadily improving over the last quarter, with Suez Canal transits of certain types of vessels reaching pre-2024 levels. This is due, in part, to Houthi restraint and their messaging that all is well. War risk insurance remains high - at around .75 % of the value of the ship. It should be noted that most of the increased traffic is made up of Chinese owned container ships and vehicle carriers. Many European owned vessels continue to favour the longer routes. As the Houthis gain influence over the Bab el Mandeb - a significant shipping and communications hub - the levels of uncertainty and regional instability, including in the Horn of Africa, will likely increase.

CUBA: U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTION, ENERGY RESTRICTIONS AND REGIME CHANGE — STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

SUBJECT: Cuban-American Support for U.S. Military Intervention, U.S.–Venezuela Operations, Cuba's Energy Crisis, and Strategic Implications for Regime Change

REFERENCES

A. Open-source reporting, official government documentation, and independent institutional research:

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- *S&P Global Commodity Insights*, Cuba's Fuel Supply and Petroleum Import Disruptions, 9 February 2026.
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- *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, Cuba Humanitarian and Energy Crisis Updates, March–May 2026.
- *Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)*, *The Next Caribbean Crisis? Assessing U.S. Military Options Toward Cuba*, 3 June 2026.
- *UK House of Commons Library*, *Cuba's Humanitarian Crisis and U.S. Tensions in 2026*, August 2026.

B. Independent analytical assessment utilizing corroborated Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT), documented military and political developments, energy-supply data, humanitarian reporting, and geopolitical risk assessment. Analytical judgments and confidence levels are independently derived.

I. EXECUTIVE ASSESSMENT

A. Available polling indicates substantial support for U.S. military intervention among Cubans and Cuban Americans surveyed in South Florida. However, such support must be distinguished from approval of prolonged American military occupation or foreign administration of Cuba.

B. The humanitarian and economic conditions influencing Cuba's political situation cannot be assessed independently of U.S. foreign-policy actions during 2025–2026.

C. The U.S. military operation in Venezuela on 3 January 2026, preceded by restrictions on Venezuelan petroleum exports, significantly altered Cuba's external energy-supply environment.

D. The subsequent interruption of Venezuelan oil deliveries, combined with additional American restrictions affecting third-country petroleum suppliers, intensified an already fragile Cuban energy and economic system.

E. Consequently, any assessment attributing Cuba's present humanitarian conditions exclusively to internal government failures would be incomplete.

F. Equally, attributing Cuba's entire economic and electrical infrastructure crisis exclusively to American intervention would overlook longstanding structural problems and government policy decisions.

Confidence Assessment: High regarding the documented sequence of military, economic, and energy-supply developments; **Moderate** regarding the relative contribution of individual causes to Cuba's wider economic crisis.

II. CUBAN-AMERICAN PUBLIC SENTIMENT

A. A survey of 800 Cubans and Cuban Americans conducted in South Florida during April 2026 reported:

(1) Approximately 79% supported some form of U.S. military intervention in Cuba.

(2) Approximately 36% favoured military intervention specifically intended to remove the existing government.

(3) Approximately 38% supported intervention combining regime change with humanitarian assistance.

(4) Approximately 88% of respondents who migrated to the United States after 2000 supported some form of intervention.

B. These findings indicate substantial support for political change involving American military action among the surveyed population.

C. However, the survey represents a defined geographical and demographic population. It cannot establish the preferences of all Cuban Americans or the Cuban population residing on the island.

D. Support for military intervention must also be distinguished from approval of the consequences of such an operation, including civilian casualties, economic disruption, or prolonged foreign military involvement.

Confidence Assessment: High regarding documented survey findings; Moderate regarding their implications for broader Cuban political sentiment

III. U.S. MILITARY OPERATION IN VENEZUELA AND REGIONAL CONSEQUENCES

A. On 3 January 2026, American military forces conducted an operation in Venezuela that resulted in the capture and removal of President Nicolás Maduro.

B. Venezuela had historically been one of Cuba's principal petroleum suppliers, making the Cuban economy highly dependent on the continuation of Venezuelan oil exports.

C. Prior to the January operation, U.S. restrictions on Venezuelan petroleum transportation and tanker movements had already reduced oil exports and disrupted shipments to Cuba.

D. Following the operation, Venezuelan petroleum deliveries to Cuba ceased. This interruption represented a substantial external energy-supply shock to the Cuban economy.

E. Available reporting indicates that Venezuela's principal petroleum production and refining facilities were not extensively damaged during the American operation. Therefore, the interruption of Cuban supplies is more accurately attributed to changes in export restrictions, transportation, and political control than to the physical destruction of Venezuelan production capacity.

F. The Venezuela operation also demonstrated Washington's willingness to employ direct military force within the Caribbean and northern South American strategic environment.

G. Nevertheless, the operation does not establish that American military action against Cuba has been authorized or that similar operational circumstances would apply.

Confidence Assessment: High regarding the operation and associated interruption of oil deliveries; **Moderate** regarding wider regional strategic implications.

IV. U.S. ENERGY RESTRICTIONS AND CUBA'S HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

A. Cuba's electricity generation, transportation networks, agricultural distribution, and public services depend heavily upon petroleum supplies.

B. During 2025, Venezuela accounted for approximately 61% of Cuba's imported crude oil, according to S&P Global shipping data, with Mexico supplying approximately 25%.

C. The interruption of Venezuelan petroleum deliveries following the January 2026 operation removed a major component of Cuba's external energy supply.

D. On 29 January 2026, President Donald Trump signed Executive Order 14380, establishing a mechanism under which additional tariffs could be imposed on countries supplying petroleum to Cuba.

E. Mexico subsequently suspended petroleum shipments amid increased American economic pressure, further restricting Cuba's ability to replace lost Venezuelan supplies.

F. These developments contributed directly to severe fuel shortages and the deterioration of essential civilian services.

G. The humanitarian consequences included:
(1) Prolonged electricity outages and national electrical-grid failures.
(2) Reduced agricultural transportation, food refrigeration, and distribution capacity.
(3) Disruptions affecting hospitals, medical equipment, and pharmaceutical storage.
(4) Restricted access to drinking water caused by electricity shortages affecting pumping and treatment systems.
(5) Reduced transportation services, industrial productivity, and economic activity.
(6) Increasing difficulties delivering humanitarian assistance and essential supplies.

H. United Nations reporting documented the impact of these energy restrictions on civilian living conditions and confirmed the increasing vulnerability of the Cuban population.

I. Importantly, Cuba's energy crisis predates the January 2026 American operation. Aging electrical infrastructure, inadequate maintenance, chronic economic weaknesses, previous petroleum shortages, and domestic policy decisions had already contributed to recurring blackouts and shortages.

J. Nevertheless, the loss of Venezuelan petroleum and restrictions affecting alternative suppliers substantially intensified those existing vulnerabilities.

K. The humanitarian consequences must therefore be assessed as the cumulative result of domestic structural weaknesses, longstanding economic restrictions, and intensified American energy-supply measures during 2026.

Confidence Assessment: High that American policy measures contributed significantly to the worsening fuel shortage and disruption of essential services; **Moderate** regarding the precise proportion of the overall crisis attributable to individual causes.

V. U.S. MILITARY CAPABILITY AND INTERVENTION CONSIDERATIONS

A. The United States possesses overwhelming conventional military advantages over Cuba in airpower, naval operations, intelligence collection, strategic mobility, and logistical support.

B. Cuba's more limited conventional military capabilities do not eliminate potential complications associated with territorial defence, internal security, organized resistance, and civilian protection.

C. Three distinct objectives require assessment:
(1) Applying limited military pressure against Cuban government institutions.
(2) Removing or compelling the departure of the existing Cuban leadership.
(3) Establishing and maintaining a legitimate replacement political administration.

D. These objectives require fundamentally different political commitments, operational resources, and strategic considerations.

E. Military superiority does not independently guarantee a stable political transition or public acceptance of a replacement government.

Confidence Assessment: High regarding comparative conventional capabilities; **Moderate to Low** regarding the predictability of outcomes following potential intervention.

VI. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND STRATEGIC INTENT

A. American political statements during October 2026 indicate continued pressure upon Cuba's existing government.

B. On 23 October 2026, President Donald Trump discussed future American action concerning Cuba, while Secretary of State Marco Rubio encouraged individuals seeking political change to cooperate with the Central Intelligence Agency.

C. These statements indicate sustained political and intelligence-related pressure but do not independently establish an authorized military invasion.

D. The connection between American economic restrictions and political objectives is relevant to assessing Washington's broader strategy.

E. Economic pressure intended to influence a government's behaviour may also generate humanitarian consequences affecting the civilian population.

F. Accordingly, American policy objectives, methods of pressure, and civilian consequences should be evaluated separately rather than assuming that intended political outcomes and actual humanitarian effects are equivalent.

Confidence Assessment: High concerning documented public statements and policy measures; **Low** concerning any inference of an approved military operation against Cuba.

VII. STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

A. Any potential American military intervention would occur within a Cuban environment already affected by substantial energy restrictions, economic instability, and humanitarian hardship.

B. These conditions could complicate the restoration of public services and effective administration following a sudden political transition.

C. The population's perception of American responsibility for existing fuel shortages and civilian hardship could influence acceptance or rejection of an externally supported replacement administration.

D. Conversely, portions of the population may attribute their circumstances primarily to Cuba's political and economic system and view political change as an opportunity for recovery.

E. Available information does not establish which perspective would predominate nationally under the circumstances of a military intervention.

F. Cuban sovereignty and public participation would remain central considerations in establishing the legitimacy of any future government.

G. A credible post-conflict strategy would require the restoration of petroleum supplies, electrical generation, food distribution, healthcare, transportation, and functioning public administration.

H. Failure to establish these conditions could create prolonged instability even following the successful removal of existing political leadership.

VIII. CONCLUSION

A. Available evidence indicates substantial support for American military intervention among Cubans and Cuban Americans surveyed in South Florida. However, this support does not

establish unanimous approval throughout the Cuban-American community or among the population residing in Cuba.

B. The humanitarian and economic difficulties presently confronting Cuba cannot be accurately assessed without recognizing the consequences of American actions in Venezuela and the subsequent restrictions on petroleum shipments to Cuba.
C. These American measures materially intensified pre-existing vulnerabilities within Cuba's energy infrastructure and economic system.

D. Cuba's longstanding economic and institutional weaknesses also remain essential factors in understanding its inability to absorb external energy-supply disruptions.

E. Any assessment of regime change must therefore consider both the military feasibility of removing the existing government and the political consequences of intervening in a country already experiencing substantial civilian hardship.

F. The central strategic issue remains whether a political transition could establish legitimate governance, restore critical infrastructure, protect civilians, and achieve economic stability without prolonged foreign military involvement.

G. The ability to conduct a successful military operation must not be confused with the ability to establish a sustainable political settlement.

OVERALL CONFIDENCE ASSESSMENT
High Confidence: Documented American military action in Venezuela, petroleum-supply restrictions, Cuban-American polling results, and the substantial humanitarian consequences of fuel shortages.

Moderate Confidence: The relative contribution of U.S. economic measures and Cuban domestic structural weaknesses to the broader economic crisis.

Moderate to Low Confidence: The potential political, security, and humanitarian outcomes of a hypothetical American military intervention in Cuba.

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https://navyleague.ca/

https://www.armycadetleague.ca/
Each year an Army Cadet graduate of the Basic Parachutist Course is awarded the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion Bursary by The Army Cadet League of Canada. This year is no exception and the bursary will be awarded again, tomorrow (24 July 2026). The Army Cadet League of Canada is able to present bursaries and scholarships to deserving cadets thanks to the generosity of our donors and partnering organizations. If you wish to help support an Army Cadet's pursuit of a post-secondary educations, please donate today. See photos:
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Remembering a king's message: "How all civilized nations should live together."
https://legionmagazine.com/remembering-a-kings-message-how-all-civilized-nations-should-live-together/

- Richard Foot
- August 5, 2026