



Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia

Dispatches

04 September 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 18 September 2026.

Quick links:

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RUSI(NS) LinkedIn Page

We are excited to announce our LinkedIn Page: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/19653001>

You all are cordially invited to join this public group, and being public, we also encourage non-members to join the RUSI(NS) LinkedIn. Stay connected, contribute and receive updated information.

Members are requested to please email their 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

Our website has been down for some time since the program which supports it was hacked, coincidentally and unfortunately with our backup server frying (that's an IT term). Use of AI by hackers is making re-establishing our account challenging. There is no ETR ATT. Anyone trying to contact RUSI(NS) can do so by emailing RUSINovaScotia@gmail.com.

Events

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

RUSI(NS) Events: August-December 2026

- August - Nil;
- September - **22 September, Tuesday**, Joint CIC/RUSI(NS) Dinner, Cunard Centre, details to follow;
- **24 September, Thursday**, 1300 hrs (Atlantic Time), Cdr Mathew Arthur, CO Advanced Naval Capabilities Unit, Virtual Presentation on "The RCN and the Drones";

- October - **5 October, Monday**, Crista-Lynn Ferguson, Director General Fighter Capability, RCAF, Focus Talk on “RCAF Future Fighter Lead-In Training”, 1300 hrs (Atlantic Time);
 - Naval Modernization Program, TBC;
- November - **4 November, Wednesday**, Remembrance Dinner, RA Park;
 - NORAD Modernization, details TBC;
- December - **3 December, Thursday**, Presentation RCAF Modernization, 1300 hrs, (Atlantic Time), Mighty Maroon Room, TBC;
 - **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, March 27
- d. Irving Shipbuilding Industries, 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. Tour Irving Shipbuilding, TBC
- q. 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: 10 September, Thursday - Royal Alberta United Service Institute (RAUSI) Fireside Chat with Dr. Sal Mercogliano, in “Breaking the Ice - The Cold Reality of Arctic Geopolitics and Commerce”, 2200 AST, online. For more information and to register: <https://rausi.ca/breaking-the-ice#registration>

New: 17 September, Thursday – “AUKUS at Five: Progress, Challenges, and the Way Forward”, live and virtual panel discussion, 8:00-9:00 am ET. For more information and to register: <https://www.csis.org/events/aukus-five-progress-challenges-and-way-forward>

New: 22 September, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation “Build Excel War Gaming Tools”, 7:00-8:30 pm ADT, online. For more information and to register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/build-excel-war-gaming-tools-tickets-1998349760929?>

New: 20 October, Tuesday - Georgetown University Wargaming Society presentation “Wargaming in the French Army: Duel Tactique” 1-2:30 pm ADT, online. For more information and to register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wargaming-in-the-french-army-duel-tactique-tickets-1994937648208>

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:

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!*

Quarterly:

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

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 Week in Canadian History:

- On 24 August 1990, HMC Ships *Athabaskan*, *Protecteur*, and *Terra Nova* with 934 personnel sail from Halifax to participate in the United Nations blockade of Iraq over its invasion of Kuwait three weeks earlier, under ‘Operation Friction’.
- On 27 August 1942, the Women’s Royal Canadian Naval Service is established.
- On 27 August 1997, HMCS *Halifax* during a fierce storm near Dakar harbour, Senegal, conducted a challenging rescue mission, managed to pluck from the water 16 fishermen through judicious ship handling and skilled boat work.
- On 2 September 1998, the Swissair passenger liner Flight 11 crashed off the coast of Nova Scotia killing all 229 on board.
- On 3 September 1939, the Battle of the Atlantic begins as a female merchant sailor Hannah Baird of Verdun, Québec, sees her ship, the 13,581-ton passenger liner SS *Athenia* torpedoed and sunk by a German U-boat west of Ireland on route to Montréal, one week before Canada declared war. The sinking kills 188 of those aboard, including Baird and three other Canadians, the first Canadian casualties of the Second World War.

@RUSI_NS on X🇨🇦

To have something posted or reposted, email RUSI(NS).

3DPrint @3DPrint_com 20 Aug posted: More RIMPAC Expeditionary AM, This Time With SPEE3D
(<https://3dprint.com/330856/more-rimpac-expeditionary-am-this-time-with-spee3d/amp/>)



3DPrint @3DPrint_com quoted:

The US military framed the biannual Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) as the Pentagon’s “largest-ever advanced manufacturing demonstration.” It also constitutes the world’s largest joint maritime exercise, & #3Dprinting was on display this year. We share what @OfficialSPEE3D worked on.

RUSI(NS) quoted:

Significant trial of @SPEE3D Expeditionary Manufacturing Unit #3Dprinting metal onboard ASTERIX, replenishment oiler leased to @RoyalCanNavy. Forward deployed support to keep

ships operating on station, no need return to base for minor repairs. @FederalFleet
@OfficialSPEE3D

National Post @nationalpost 21 Aug posted:
Michel Maisonneuve: We need military bases, ports and transportation corridors to truly remain sovereign (Michel Maisonneuve: Canada must defend the North to keep it
<https://nationalpost.com/opinion/michel-maisonneuve-canada-must-defend-the-north-to-keep-it>)

RUSI(NS) quoted:

“Security underpins trade, but infrastructure underpins security.” What does the #Arctic infrastructure development policy/plan look like? Is it whole-of-society, multi-sector, multi-domain & considers defence, security & safety requirements?



“Advanced Simulation Training Supports Successful Introduction of First Naval Large Tug at Canadian Forces Base Halifax”
(<https://www.mi.mun.ca/news/newstitle,106065,en.php>)

Harbour service support is part of balanced fleet.
@CanadianForces Auxiliary Service crews need/are worthy of advanced training.



Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia” on Facebook

To have something posted or commented, email RUSI(NS).

Marine Corps Lab Accepts Surface Craft Prototype
<https://news.usni.org/2026/08/25/marine-corps-lab-accepts-surface-craft-prototype>

“Ancillary Surface Craft are designed to provide transportation of personnel and supplies to shallow-gradient, unimproved and unsurveyed shorelines.”



New term to some of us old salts, “Ancillary Surface Craft”, especially ‘ancillary’ in lieu of ‘auxiliary’. Not a type of vessel in the NATO standard. Its use could have written this off as incorrect reporting or a project title, but there is “ASC 1” painted on the vessel’s bow (of course, that could be taken as Auxiliary Surface Craft). It is a US Marine Corps vessel so the expectation would have been that Marines would use the NATO standard as followed by the US Navy (not that the USN follows it closely, viz LCS Littoral Combat Ship, another type not

in the standard). Might there be an Australian influence?

Ancillary (= providing necessary extra help, support, or supplies to a main system, organization, or activity) is actually an appropriate term: “The ASC is intended to complement the larger Medium Landing Ship. The ASC is sized and configured with a very shallow draft to deliver logistical support to landing sites beyond the reach of larger vessels, according to the release. Taken together, the LSM and ASC give a Stand-in Force a route from an intermediate staging base to the beach without dependence on ports, piers or causeways.”

So, is this the beginning of development of a new term/concept in ship typing? Certainly, the old typing is getting increasingly lacking, what with growth **in ship sizes and capabilities, and with drones entering operational service.**

How Quickly Can the DOD Rebuild and Recast the Munitions Industrial Base?

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/how-quickly-can-dod-rebuild-and-recast-munitions-industrial-base>



“The wars in Iran and Ukraine have shown how the growing importance of air and missile defense, the accelerating pace of combat, and the risk of simultaneous, protracted conflicts across multiple regions can each strain the munitions industrial base.”

A US-focused article, and certainly the ‘keys’ it lists are US, but there are thoughts for those involved in the Canadian munitions industrial base to consider.

Further:

There’s no shortcut to replenish US munitions stockpiles

<https://www.defenseone.com/business/2026/08/theres-no-shortcut-replenish-us-munitions-stockpiles/415558/>

And (for something Canadian):

New Brunswick site picked for new Canadian explosives factory as NATO demand grows

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-nalagx-new-brunswick-explosives-factory-nato-munitions-ukraine/>

Then there’s the question: what is the Canadian munitions industrial base?

Inside Brazil’s 3D-Printed Gun Supply Chain

<https://warontherocks.com/inside-brazils-3d-printed-gun-supply-chain/>

It’s very probably already happening that criminals are printing metal gun parts to manufacture illegal guns. Challenges for law enforcement and the advanced manufacturing industry.



What Canada's shipbuilding strategy is getting right, and where it is still failing

<https://opencanada.org/what-canadas-shipbuilding-strategy-is-getting-right-and-where-it-is-still-failing/>

“The shipbuilding lesson three quarters of a century after the St. Laurent class is the same one: the most capable warship in the world means little if the country waits a generation to receive it. The strategic frame around build-at-home, continuous build, shipyard rationalization, and modularity is mostly correct. The cultural problem is the impulse to ask one ship to do everything and to ask new ships to be paper designs first and water designs second. Until addressed, the impulse will leave the Royal Canadian Navy without the warships it needs.”



Other Sources

#Arctic #NATO #Russia

The Russian Arctic Threat in the Era of Geoeconomics

<https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/russian-arctic-threat-era-of-geoeconomics/>

#artificial intelligence

How AI text watermarking works: a visual guide

<https://deClaude.org/watermarking/>

Not specifically defence or security, but relevant to information and media operations.

#Canadian Armed Forces

Residents say goodbye to long-standing fuel tanks in Eastern Passage, N.S.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/atlantic/nova-scotia/article/residents-say-goodbye-to-long-standing-fuel-tanks-in-eastern-passage-ns/>

Note the maps.

#Canadian Armed Forces

Canada already has enough trained troops to fill the Reserves — but we let them just walk away

<https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/canada-already-has-enough-trained-troops-to-fill-the-reserves-but-we-let-them-just-walk-away-j-l-granatstein-for-inside-policy/>

Cyber Intelligence

OpenAI's Astra Crosses 'Critical' Cyber Threshold After Finding Zero-Days

https://www.securityweek.com/openais-astra-becomes-first-model-to-cross-critical-cybersecurity-threshold/?utm_campaign=31203373-

[SecurityWeek%20Daily%20Briefing&utm_medium=email&hsenc=p2ANqtz-8uAxMQz9RJ7yG9j5qfnawYvoKtNs6VliL0ds5nKC-1OYZ8kzApaJgkm-](https://www.securityweek.com/openais-astra-becomes-first-model-to-cross-critical-cybersecurity-threshold/?utm_campaign=31203373-SecurityWeek%20Daily%20Briefing&utm_medium=email&hsenc=p2ANqtz-8uAxMQz9RJ7yG9j5qfnawYvoKtNs6VliL0ds5nKC-1OYZ8kzApaJgkm-)

[2lXAtj0oIsD9s3_DogmfgTgUe04HdW3-F7Wh4EcyH2_ZDtYogJzc5e2FI&_hsmi=437181770&utm_content=437181770&utm_source=hs_email](https://www.theregister.com/security/2026/09/02/claude-mythos-only-model-to-complete-full-cyber-kill-chain-experts-say/5294071)

In a separate set of tests, a different AI was identified as able to independently launch attacks.

Claude Mythos only model to complete full cyber kill chain, experts say
<https://www.theregister.com/security/2026/09/02/claude-mythos-only-model-to-complete-full-cyber-kill-chain-experts-say/5294071>

#defence industry

Canada is bolstering its defense industry as US relations fray
<https://apnews.com/article/canada-defense-america-carney-5605df36c99fc002da9e653fbc6f1e3c>

#defence policy

Climate Change as a Security Threat: Climate Risks into Defence Policy
<https://natoassociation.ca/climate-change-as-a-security-threat-climate-risks-into-defence-policy/>

#defence policy

Appearance Before the Standing Senate Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs (SECD): Mandate, Priorities, and NATO 2% - 27 April 2026
<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/proactive-disclosure/2026/secd-mandate-priorities-nato-2percentage.html>
Dated 27 April 2026 but appears to be only posted online 21 August 2026.

#defence policy

Stop Squandering our Investments in Defence Capabilities
<https://cdainstitute.ca/stop-squandering-our-investments-in-defence-capabilities/>

#defence procurement #artillery

The US Army Is Dependent on Canada for 155mm Artillery Shell Production
<https://share.google/HdCBJ5LxAYbj06Dgr>

ProPublica's Jesse Coburn chronicled how a Texas artillery factory failed to produce a single usable shell. The fiasco ended up costing the Army half a billion dollars.
The U.S. Army paid General Dynamics \$533 million for an artillery factory that failed to produce a single usable shell. More in:
<https://www.facebook.com/share/14kpibfCc1i/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

#drones

Building the Army's Human Advantage: A Vision of Readiness for the Future of Autonomous Warfare
<https://mwi.westpoint.edu/building-the-armys-human-advantage-a-vision-of-readiness-for-the-future-of-autonomous-warfare/>

“Ultimately, the military that fields the most autonomous systems will not hold the decisive advantage in AI-enabled warfare. Instead, it will belong to whoever most effectively recruits, develops, empowers, and retains professionals capable of employing those systems in combat.”

#drones

Betting on Autonomous Aircraft

<https://warontherocks.com/cogs-of-war/betting-on-autonomous-aircraft/>

“The defense debate is consumed by weapons and mass. One of the earliest movers in AI-powered drones believes the real gap is in autonomy and military intelligence.”

#drones #Russia-Ukraine War

Ukraine’s Ground Robots and the Economics of Survival

<https://warontherocks.com/ukraines-ground-robots-and-the-economics-of-survival/>

“What matters is not the robot itself, but the chain that starts in orbit, moves through spectrum, software, navigation, and forward repair, and ends at the trench.”

#information operations

Analysis: In The Propaganda War, Iran Came Prepared, Leveraged The Media Space

<https://www.memri.org/reports/propaganda-war-iran-came-prepared-leveraged-media-space>

#information operations

Sailors and Marines advised to hide military ties on social media

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/navy-marines-warning-personnel-bases/>

From a colleague in the business:

Force Protection should be a serious consideration these days.

#maritime security #legal

Russia considers placing troops, weapons on civilian ships as it struggles to protect shadow fleet, Zelensky says

<https://kyivindependent.com/russia-considers-placing-troops-weapons-on-civilian-ships-as-it-struggles-to-protect-shadow-fleet-zelensky-says/>

Now that could be a problem for sanctions enforcement/boardings.

#NATO #Arctic

Security Cooperation Among the Arctic NATO Allies

<https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/security-cooperation-among-arctic-nato-allies>

“...Canada position itself as a defender of NATO's western and northern flanks.” Canada is not a flank but a front - we are face-to-face with the Russians, albeit over inhospitable terrain/seas.

(Date is obviously in error.)

#NORAD

US and Canadian forces practise cruise missile defence

<https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/us-and-canadian-forces-practise-cruise-missile-defence/>

Appears that the article's author is trying to say that training that "covers coordinated responses along both the eastern and western approaches to the continent" is a change to how the NORAD "region is understood." Really?

From an air colleague:

The author is dated and limited in his thinking. NORAD thinks more along the lines of an AO rather than AOR, much more global. NORAD includes the traditional approaches but has been operating much more broadly in threat and possible methods of approach since even before 2005. Countering terrorism in its many manifestations is a simple example.

#NORAD

NORAD's Two Paths Amid Modernization

<https://dsm.forecastinternational.com/2026/08/25/norads-two-paths-amid-modernization/>

#Royal Canadian Navy

From Simulation to Service - Advanced Simulation Training Supports Successful Introduction of First Naval Large Tug at Canadian Forces Base Halifax

<https://www.mi.mun.ca/news/newstitle,106065,en.php>

#Russia-Ukraine War

Russia is running out of cash due to its war in Ukraine: report

<https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2026/08/28/russia-is-running-out-of-cash-due-to-its-war-in-ukraine-report/>

Wallets win wars!

#Russia-Ukraine War #Indo-Pacific

Potential Northern Offensive, Exotic Proposals, Hardening Positions and a Distracted Superpower. The Big Five 30 August edition

<https://mickryan.substack.com/p/potential-northern-offensive-exotic>

#seapower

How Trumpism Rejects Sea Power

<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/how-trumpism-rejects-sea-power>

"Today, it appears clear that America's land-power identity is subordinating its maritime one." An interesting article for its assessment, and relevant because ultimately Canada has to relate to some extent with the US and we need to understand their situation (reality).

#3D printing

US Joint Effort Tests At-Sea Metal 3D Printing, RIMPAC 2026

<https://3dprintingindustry.com/news/us-joint-effort-tests-at-sea-metal-3d-printing-rimpac-2026-254255/>

SPEE3D takes cold spray printing to sea

<https://www.metaltechnews.com/story/2026/09/02/tech-bytes/spee3d-takes-cold-spray-printing-to-sea/2934.html>

Two more articles, further to an article noted in a RUSI(NS) X post as reported in last edition of Dispatches, about a trial of 3D printing of metal about MV *Asterix* during Exercise RIMPAC 2026.

Odds and Sods

#drones

Bradley Fighting Vehicle Lugging Load Of Swarming Ground Drones Is A Sign Of What's To Come

<https://www.twz.com/land/bradley-fighting-vehicle-lugging-load-of-swarming-ground-drones-is-a-sign-of-whats-to-come>



Hmm, how do you type a vehicle that is carrying UGV? Doesn't matter whether the UGV are ISR or OWA. Maybe it doesn't matter - vehicles carrying drones (any type) could well become the norm in future operations.

#drones

Steve Daly 🇨🇦🇷🇺 @SteveDaly15 21 Aug quoted:
The anti-drone cage is older than you might expect.

hw97karbine @hw97karbine Aug 20 posted (video: <https://x.com/SteveDaly15/status/2090693995953344795>):



British Mark I female tank His Majesty's Land Ship
"OH I SAY" fitted with a frame to deflect enemy grenades trundling along at walking pace circa 1916.

The wheel assembly at the rear was intended to help with stability and steering but turned out to be unnecessary in the field.

Comment: Love the "His Majesty's Land Ship" bit..."

#drones

The first functioning unmanned aerial vehicle
<https://www.slashgear.com/1202335/how-modern-drones-made-their-military-debut-during-wwi/>

1917 one-way attack ‘drone’, the Kettering Bug.

(Okay, the label ‘drone’ didn’t arise until the mid 1930s.)



#Drones on Parade!

Ground robotic systems parade along Kyiv’s main street: modern Ukrainian weapons showcase
<https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2026/08/24/8050081/>

Air and surface drones ‘paraded’, too.

Drones really are replacing people in many activities...



#drones #Russia-Ukraine War

Ukraine Situation Report: Kyiv Is Turning Soviet-Era Armor Into Robotic Combat Vehicles
<https://www.twz.com/news-features/ukraine-situation-report-kyiv-is-turning-soviet-era-armor-into-robotic-combat-vehicles>

Demonstrates the utility of keeping old vehicles like BRDM-2 armored reconnaissance vehicles in reserve/storage. Lesson there for Canada.

And as a counter-drone measure: “Russian forces have reportedly fitted a UAZ-452 “Bukhanka” vehicle with mirrored panels as a potential countermeasure against drones using optical or AI-assisted guidance. The improvised modification appears intended to interfere with the drone’s ability to visually identify and track the vehicle by altering its appearance and creating reflections.”



Institute for the Study of War (ISW): Russian Occupation Update, 21 August, 2026

The Alabuga Special Economic Zone (ASEZ), a key drone production facility for the Russian military, has begun recruitment efforts aimed directly at teenagers from

occupied Ukraine. The Alabuga Polytechnic Education Center has begun recruitment for students aged 15 to 21 from occupied Kherson and Zaporizhia oblasts. Alabuga Polytechnic is a technical college located on the premises of the ASEZ, which is Russia's main production hub for strike, decoy, and reconnaissance drones used in the war against Ukraine. Alabuga Polytech's website was specifically advertising recruitment for students from occupied Crimea and Kherson, Zaporizhia, Donetsk, and Luhansk oblasts as of August 20, 2026

The Russian security apparatus is artificially manipulating border laws to create the impression that occupied Ukrainian territories have been fully integrated into Russia. The Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) published two draft orders to the Federal Portal of Draft Regulatory Legal Acts on August 12 that propose the elimination of the state border status between Russia's Rostov and Voronezh oblasts with occupied Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, as well as the elimination of the state border between occupied Crimea and occupied Kherson Oblast.

Full Report in <https://understandingwar.org/research/russia-ukraine/russian-occupation-update-august-21-2026/>

Macdonald-Laurier Institute, 22-29 August, 2026

Clarifying Canada's role in NATO's Arctic Sentry: Nicole J. Jackson:

<https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/clarifying-canadas-role-in-natos-arctic-sentry-nicole-j-jackson/>

[The Russian Arctic threat in the era of geoeconomics](#)

Maritime News – 01 September 2026: Toilet paper and human error led to 11-hour USS *New Orleans* fire and \$12 million in damage, investigation finds

On Aug. 20, 2025, an 11-hour blaze broke out aboard the San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock USS *New Orleans* off the coast of Okinawa, Japan, leading to approximately \$12 million in damage. Sailors successfully extinguished the blaze, leaving two service members with minor injuries.

The fire took an abnormal amount of time to suppress because 100 boxes of toilet paper blocked sprinkler heads inside a special clothing storeroom that would have otherwise helped douse the flames, the investigation found. The toilet paper acted as kindling for the fire, making it grow larger and increase in duration.

Mick Ryan's Defence Review

Building Strategic Depth, Longer Range Sanctions, Putin's Speech and North Korean Learning About Modern War. The Big Five, 23 August edition

<https://mickryan.substack.com/p/building-strategic-depth-longer-range>

"Ukraine has constructed, and then normalised, an evolved non-nuclear strategic bombing doctrine, which is cloaked in the lexicon of "sanctions". This language is important because Ukraine wants the strikes to be viewed in Western capitals as economic pressure rather than

the kind of nightly attacks on Ukrainian cities undertaken by Russia.”

“Ultimately, this means that the Wildberries campaign is potentially seeing the e-commerce sector being named as a target category in modern war.”

“This is an indicator that our views on strategic depth must continue to evolve to encompass many elements besides physical distance and geography. As Nadia Schadlow wrote recently, strategic depth remains an old yet relevant concept but requires updating for the 21st century.

Further, she describes how:

We can no longer measure strategic depth by miles alone. Digital networks, satellites, global supply chains, and geopolitical influence allow adversaries to degrade our defences and to strengthen their ability to maneuver in ways that bypass traditional borders altogether.”

Naval Association Canada (NAC) News, 21 August-3 September, Selected Information

Canada : [Canada’s Most Powerful Icebreaker Reaches North Pole](#)

[Canadian Armed Forces Launch Operation NANOOK NUNAKPUT to Strengthen Security Along the Canadian Arctic Archipelago](#)

[Clarifying Canada’s role in NATO’s Arctic Sentry: Nicole J. Jackson](#)

[Shrinking sea ice makes year-round shipping possible on Hudson Bay: Manitoba premier's office](#)

[TKMS & Kongsberg Geospatial: Building Canada's Next Submarine Combat System](#)

[Woman of war: The British commodore deterring Russian subs and keeping the seas open](#)

[Young Indigenous navy program graduates parade in Esquimalt](#)

Canadian Defence Review, Vol. 32, Issue.4, 2026 is now available at: [Special Navy Edition](#)

The World:

China: [From cargo to combat: China urged to prepare civilian ships for use in war](#)

Indian Ocean: [Malacca Strait States Will Keep Waters ‘Free, Open and Safe’](#)

Russia: [Moscow warns UK over drones used by Ukraine](#)

Somalia: [Armed Pirates Hijack Cargo Ship Off Somalia](#)

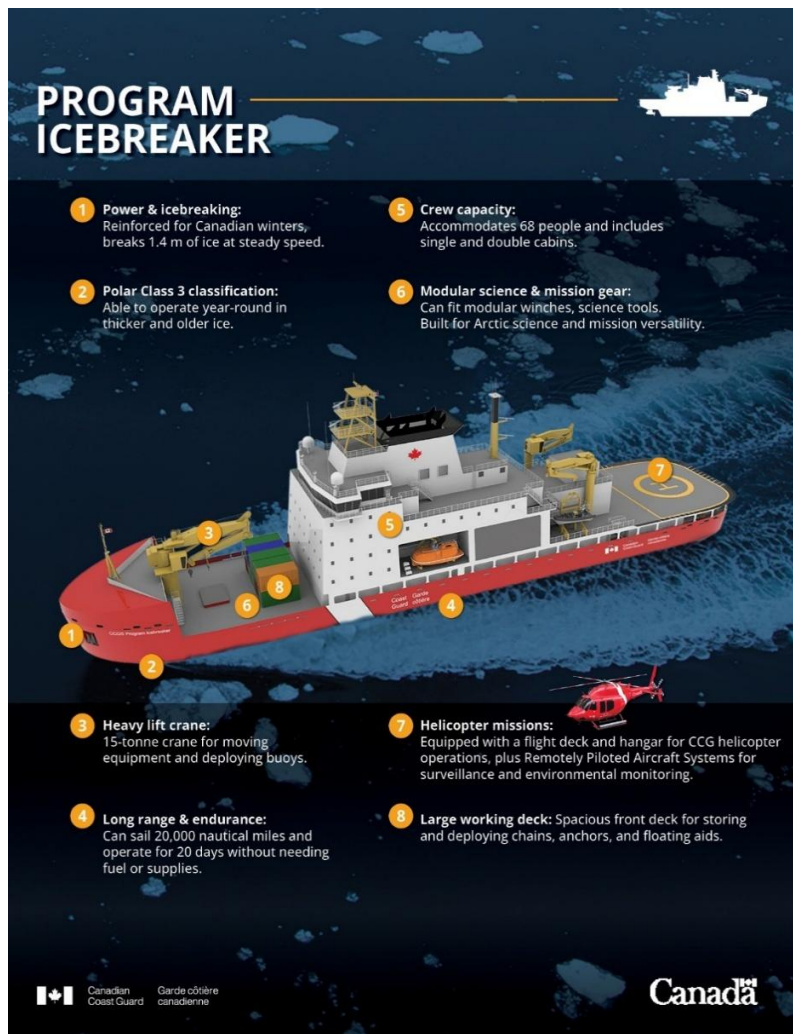
Taiwan: [Taiwan Hai Kun Submarine Fires First Torpedo Validating Combat System Against Chinese Navy Threats](#)

New program icebreakers for the Canadian Coast Guard

Prime Minister Carney announces the largest shipbuilding contract in Québec's history
<https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2026/08/24/prime-minister-carney-announces-largest-shipbuilding-contract-quebecs> (comments at:
<https://www.truenorthstrategicreview.ca/p/prime-minister-carney-announces-the-7b1>)
and

Davie Awarded Historic Contract to Build Six Program Icebreakers Under the National Shipbuilding Strategy

<https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/davie-awarded-historic-contract-to-build-six-program-icebreakers-under-the-national-shipbuilding-strategy-888035960.html>



Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) International Outlook, 21 August-3 September, 2026 Selected Information

Canada: [“Canada Conducts Several Military Operations in the Arctic”](#)

[“Prime Minister Carney announces the largest shipbuilding contract in Québec’s history”](#)

The World:

Democratic Republic of the Congo: [“Ebola outbreak in Democratic Republic of the Congo now deadliest in country’s history”](#)

Gulf of Aden: [“Somali pirates hijack oil tanker off Yemen in latest attack”](#)

Israel / West Bank: [“UK, France, Germany, Italy and Canada condemn Israel’s West Bank settlement project”](#)

Solomon Islands: [“Solomon Islands signs security agreement with US, reaffirms neutrality”](#)

South China Sea: [“China completes first stage of work at disputed South China Sea reef, images show”](#)

United States: [“US imposes sanctions on ICC president”](#)

[**RUSI-A Journal United Service Spring 2026**](#) is now available online.

All of the Institute Proceedings also have videos accessible from the National Video Theatre
Page: [The RUSI of Australia Video Theatre](#)

RUSI-UK Research Paper: Our paper, ‘[Modern Targeting in European Militaries](#)’ 28 August 2026.

The paper highlights a fundamental tension: while greater automation can offer increased speed, situational awareness and ‘decision advantage’, safeguards, legal reviews and human oversight inevitably introduce friction into the targeting cycle.

SAC Notes

1. Observation on World Affairs

Issues to Watch

- US Canada Trade War
- US-Iran Conflict including Bab al Mandab
- Israel Iranian Proxies increasing international pressure against Israel.
- Russia-Ukraine Conflict development of vastly superior drones and missiles on both sides. There is a switch in Russian target to gas and electrical works in Ukraine.
- Defeat of Russian forces in Africa by Islamist bands in Mali.

- China and the South China Sea, China's imperial reach has become more troublesome to Japan and the Philippines
- Trump and Global Tariffs
- India and Pakistan and Pak's role in China supporting Iran against the US.

O Canada

I will start this section to recommend a book published by RUSI NB and RUSI Vancouver called "Fulfilling the Promise of Canada," published in 2026 by Double Dagger Press also found at link: <https://doubledagger.ca/>

It is collection of essays by various authors that delve into the problem that RUSI NS has also called for or as they say "Charting a National Strategy for an Unstable World" as a result of changes to our neighbour to the South. Canada has relied on the US far more than we should. The current administration is untrustworthy and no longer a reliable ally at the National level. At the worker bee level Canadian and US forces still work well together. This will not change in the near term but overall, there is realization that Canada has to do more and become capable of more independent actions in the areas of foreign policy, defence, security and public safety. The Canadian public will have to be given the information to help them understand the change. This book is a good start.

The Arctic is now a major theatre of operations although Canada's ability is still largely confined to short periods in the spring summer and early fall. Still, it is a vast improvement over the long-term neglect prior to the Harper Government.

The Arctic is becoming more open for a longer period of the year. A suitable route through the Arctic cuts weeks off travel if assistance is available. Russia has spent decades improving many of the facilities developed by its Union of Soviet Socialist Republic's work across the entire Northern coast. Fourteen bases and ports have been rehabilitated and are now operational. Russia also has 40 Arctic capable icebreakers, the largest fleet in the world. No other country is as prepared for the opening of the Arctic than Russia.

Canada is facing decades of neglect and navel gazing as most continental powers do. Canada is a Maritime nation in a physical sense but not within the minds of Canada's population. Most Canadian goods are shipped in ships as it is the cheapest way to move goods. Canada is blessed with a multitude of ports, but these ports also are largely neglected by the centre of the country. Halifax for instance has only one rail line, Canso and Sydney are without suitable rail and road systems. Canada relies on the port of Montreal deep in the seaway. In 1943, the St Lawrence seaway was shut down for the remainder of the war. Essentially because German submarines defeated the RCN's escort forces. Halifax became the vital port for the war in Europe.

Modern Canada has forgotten that piece of history.

One last point, there is the issue of the F 35. Canada has been part of the program virtually since the start of the program in 1997. It is a fifth-generation aircraft designed to be able to take out enemy aircraft, cruise missiles and drones and long-range. It is delicate by comparison

to fourth generation aircraft such as the Gripen. We have purchased 16 with long lead equipment for a further 14 aircraft. Canada initially agreed to purchase 88 F 35s in four tranches. We have spent hundreds of millions in development and the earlier purchases of the aircraft. The RCAF has planned for this aircraft and has modernised and is continuing to improve infrastructure to house and maintain the F 35. As a result, Canada gets to build parts of the F 35 for the entire fleet around the world. Most of our allies have acquired the F 35. Canada needs to think about the way ahead, the 88 F 35s should be purchased and the number of fighters reviewed and the gap F 35s that the F 35s have should be filled by another type of aircraft to best fill that gap.

The argument against a mixed fleet is weak. Canada has usually had a mixed fleet of fighters until the arrival of the FCF 188 Hornet. Different missions require different aircraft. Canada needs a strong capable air force to protect the homeland, and half measures and pre-Ukraine-Russia war planning is no longer reasonable. A dual fighter fleet coupled with a large tanker fleet supported by a suitable number of AEW aircraft can deal with the current threat. Anti-ballistic missile capability is still required.

United States

The current US Administration is mercurial and vastly different from other administrations. It has continued to devastate the US economy, industry, the Constitution, the well-being of US citizens and the global operating system that depended on a stable US as a country and world leader. Will this change even if a new government takes a more traditional approach to its role? The answer is no; massive damage has been done to the world's ability to trust the US. The current administration has taken a wrecking ball to the old-world order and squandered the trust of the liberal democracies and weakened the US position in the world overall. Is there anything to replace the role of the US? The evidence is scant as yet and we may well be facing a period of a relapse to a more primitive world all courtesy of this administration.

The US attacked Iran over the weekend thus ending a flawed but mainly operational ceasefire. Iran has responded to the attack with a massive barrage of missiles and drones targeting US bases in the Middle east. In the first week of the war, the US President stated that there would be no boots on the ground. It eliminated something that Iran had to worry about immediately and weakened the US overall position. The threat of ground operations would have required Iran to meet that challenge further causing disruption to Iranian planning. Now, after nearly seven months, the US is once again considering a ground operation. The name Gallipoli comes to mind.

The US Navy, long a bulwark for the US around the globe, is stretched to the maximum. It is increasingly obvious that maintenance of the ships and the welfare of the crew has suffered as a result. For the first time in recent memory, there is no carrier strike group in the Western Pacific as China has been increasingly active against US allies especially the Philippines, Taiwan and Japan. This threat is likely to increase especially with the US occupied by the Iran conflict.

Economically, the US is suffering as other countries sell US bonds when the US economy is structurally weakened. This is forcing the US to increase the interest rate on their bonds. The

US dollar is the main safe currency for world trade, entities such as the BRICS are now looking at alternatives. Then there are the US tariffs created by a regime that has never taken basic economics. The credibility of the US as the holder of the reserve currency status has been damaged and is unlikely to reach its previous level. The US economy will weaken because of the incompetence of the current regime.

Moldova

The year 1991 marks a year when most Soviet Republics finally declared independence from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, (USSR). This includes Ukraine and Moldova. Fittingly, Volodymyr Zelenskiy attended Moldova's independence Day of 27 August 2026 in Chisinau Moldova where a large military parade took place with more than 2000 troops from eight nations took part including the United States, Ukraine, Romania, Lithuania, Italy, Poland, France, and the Czech Republic. This is in return for President Maia Sandu's visit to Kyiv on Ukraine's 35th anniversary of their independence.

What is an important take away, is that Moldova and Ukraine are building a large supportive organization to help their overall security. President Sandu also stated, during a separate ceremony that "As long as Ukraine fights, Moldova can sleep peacefully." President Zelenskiy was also awarded Moldova's top award, the Order of the Republic.

In the time I have been writing about Moldova as "the canary in the coal mine," it is the first time that I truly feel that it is increasingly clear that Moldova will have a bright and more prosperous future as an independent state within the West. The ability of Moldova to take advantage of Western support will make this a reality. This comment still understands that there is much to be done, but the situation is actually more optimistic. The information for these paragraphs comes from a United 24 article called "Zelenskiy Visits Sandu on Moldova's Independence Day" by Katherina Popilnichenko dated 27 August 2026.

Georgia

Georgian authorities state that 113 k Russians have entered Georgia in the past week to avoid possible mobilization inside Russia as of 29 August 2026. An encouraging sign of a brighter future.

Inside Georgia a new anti-Russian occupation group has recently been formed. During the 2008 war, Russia occupied Abkhazia and South Ossetia from Georgia. The group was formed to prevent a permanent Russian occupation of these territories.

Demonstrations are continuing every day in Georgia now nearly 700 days in a row.

Information was provided from News Now news service.

Belarus

It is becoming increasingly clear that Belarus' ability is narrowing. In recent months there have been major exercises with Russian forces inside the country including one that exercised nuclear forces that Russia controls, but the weapons would be deployed by Belarus forces.

Belarus allegedly has SU 25 ground attack aircraft and the missiles and launchers for the Oreshnik missile. The nuclear weapons are under Russian control.

This spring and summer saw Belarus build new ground defences near the border including a new training base near rail loading/unloading ramps that would be necessary for Russian forces to be brought into the border area. Ukraine has warned Belarus that action would be taken against Belarus if the work was to continue. Most of the time it is the normal border guards along the border and not regular troops. Belarus has exercised a practice mobilization, but the success of this exercise is unknown. Most citizens of Belarus are against participation in the war.

Belarus has continued to import people into the country to conduct a form of hybrid warfare against its neighbours. These “immigrants” are moved to the border area by Belarus drivers and vehicles in an organized group, they are outfitted with a small amount of food and general directions. They then attempt to enter Lithuania or Poland by somehow getting through the difficult border fences. In recent weeks large tunnels were found that were approximately 30 M long, extending under the border fence. The game continues, but there should be little doubt that if Belarus enters the war, it is likely the regime will fall. Lukashenko and the war are highly unpopular with the citizens of Belarus and if the border area is occupied by more than Belarus border guards then Ukraine may choose to hit first before they are organized. Russia no longer has the troops to correct the problem if it occurs.

Israel – Iran Conflict including Proxies

Israel has remained out of the main US Iran conflict although it was heavily involved at the start. Its main effort remains the Gaza Strip and Southern Lebanon with a naval effort available to deal with the Houthis. Each day there are reports of specific Hamas operatives being killed in Gaza. Hamas has been unable to regenerate itself in order to attack and defend itself against Israeli forces.

In Southern Lebanon, Israel has been destroying Hezbollah infrastructure in occupied areas. They have also eliminated targets of opportunity on a regular basis thus eliminating or decreasing Hezbollah’s efforts against Israel. This also includes wholesale destruction of Lebanese villages identified as providing support and shelter to Hezbollah.

The Houthis are in Yemen, so Israel’s main effort is to destroy incoming missiles and drones. Israel will continue this approach for the foreseeable future.

Israel will continue to degrade Iran’s proxies for as long as it takes. It views them as a continuing major threat that if allowed to regenerate will only get worse. Iran is dealt with in another way. It is likely that they will use organizations that conduct operations quietly and under the radar. They will appear as required. Their main goal is the elimination of key individuals and systems. This is not over yet.

Israel took possession of their sixth Draken: class submarine. A new version of the type 209 modified for Israel. Israel is thought to use a modified version of the Popeye air launched cruise missile on its submarine. There are suspicions that this missile is capable of carrying a tactical nuclear weapon. It has a range of around 1500 kms although this is not verified with

sufficient facts. Israel has just finished its modernization of its submarine fleet. It has increasingly relied on Israel's Navy as a major deterrent. It is expected that Israel will continue to build its fleet for regional operations including the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Expect this to continue.

Russia-Ukraine Conflict

The war continues unabated; casualties mount on both sides, but it is now estimated that Russia is losing eight men killed or wounded to one Ukrainian on the front. Ukraine is using larger amounts of more sophisticated drones in the 20 kms to 40 kms area that is now no man's land. Russian casualties have now reached over 120 k this summer alone without significant gains of consequence.

Both countries are having difficulties recruiting people to meet their requirements. It is widely rumoured that Russia intends to initiate a "second mobilization" although a Kremlin spokesman states that the first mobilization order remains in force. Numbers per month have now dropped to around 800 new soldiers a day but losses now exceed more than 1.2 k per day. Word of an increased call for new troops have now caused a veritable flood of young men into surrounding countries such as Georgia which had more than 100 k cross the border in the last week.

The real change is in the continuing use of drones and missiles which is increasing in both size and quantity of munitions used, Technology increases almost daily with an overall change every six months to totally new systems. The main difference is the choice of targets.

Russia continues to hit mainly civilian targets, and specific infrastructure such as power plants, transfer stations, railway facilities, but also includes high rise apartment blocks, supermarkets, major department stores, shopping centres. Ukraine appears to take a more strategic approach destroying or damaging key facilities that are part of the war effort and Russia's overall economy. This has included oil refineries, LNG facilities, oil and gas storage sites, major factories building parts for Russian equipment especially for missiles and so on. Ukraine specifically does not target Russian civilians. Ukraine is unable to knock down ballistic missiles, and Russia is very aware of this weakness and has ramped up their use effectively. Ukrainian civilian casualties are mounting as a result,

Ukraine does intend to return the favour this fall and winter when the first Ukrainian ballistic missile becomes available in sufficient numbers.

Economically, Russia has run out of money but continues the battle by any means available including raiding peoples' bank accounts. Unlike Ukraine, Russia has few friends and those willing to cooperate with Russia do so for a price. Ukraine has better friends who allow Kyiv to continue to fight knowing they have a line on finances. Both sides still have major economic issues, yet Russia appears to be the heavier burden at this point.

Even some Russian sources are now suggesting that Putin may be removed at some point and end the war. There are certainly people capable of conducting such an attack. The next few months will be critical as the conflict continues with fewer options. Both sides have essentially

entered a period of limited ability to succeed in any meaningful way. This winter will be interesting.

China

China and more specifically, Xi Jinping, have been conducting a long-term campaign against corruption in the CCP. “Corruption” within the CCP is rampant with the entire structure and economy built on an ongoing series of misinformation usually created by those wishing to ingratiate themselves with their superiors. Bad news is suppressed by way of demoting the individual or arresting them on “interesting” charges such as corruption. The entire CCP is built on a house of cards.

China is not a reliable partner. It also uses its own legal system to “encourage” other countries to come to their way of “thinking” usually at the expense of that country. Canada especially has had examples of this method of operation; the best example being the issue of Meng Wanzhou and the “two Michaels” arrested on trumped up charges, A Canadian serving time also had his fifteen-year prison sentence increased to the death penalty to pressure the Canadian government, which they did successfully. Canada also paid through economic coercion such as the severe tariffs on canola, beef, pork and other agricultural products. Yet the current government has foolishly called China a “major partner” in recent comments from Melanie Joly. While the current US administration is abhorrent, it is not forever and generally speaking the US has been an exceptionally generous partner and all Canadian governments at all levels should remember this fact.

China intends to do harm across the Pacific. They are currently creating conditions to break the island chains that prevent them from conducting major operations. China has grown an incredible Navy that has matured rapidly into a preeminent power in the Indo- Pacific region. It continues to push its illegal claims in both the East and South China Seas. They have bullied smaller countries that do have legal ownership. Such as Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Russia and especially the Philippines. Russia is a surprise, but China still considers a major proportion of the Russian far east as their own territory. A Russian loss in the war with Ukraine could have far reaching effects far beyond the territory of that conflict.

China’s regular armed forces are loyal and are part of the CCP not the country despite efforts To portray it as so. The PLA serves the Party and its survival. Since Xi’s rise to power in 2012, he has also made efforts to further orient the military regime to himself. He has taken on many of the positions of power such as Chair of the Central Military Commission to ensure he has sufficient power to create an organization faithful to him alone. This led to anti-corruption purges, while in the earlier times it was used to eliminate those general and flag officers (GO/FO) from other factions inside the CCP to those who support Xi. In the past two years there have been a series of major embarrassments created apparently by Xi appointed officers. This includes intercontinental ballistic missiles with their fuel tanks filled with water rather than the appropriate fuel., this past year, the arrest of most of the engineering team responsible for the design and production of the J 20, which is now considered a major aeronautical failure Several hundred officers from all services have been arrested or removed for corruption.

The main result is that China is unlikely to be able to invade Taiwan as the loss in leadership due to the purges has been so enormous. According to recent media reports, Chinese exercises have been oriented towards setting conditions for a naval blockade of Taiwan as an example. Information courtesy of our “Ottawa correspondent” now states that China is using China Coast Guard ships to enforce Chinese regulation 200 km east of Taiwan this summer. This is a change but not for the better. Some outlets have now suggested that the Chinese military is now looking at 2049 as the possible year for unification with the mainland. Time will tell and so will China’s other issues such as demographics, the economy, growing resentment toward the CCP. Will China even survive?

2. Commentary from our NATO Correspondent:

I. The Northern Sea Route - specifically Russia's early (and large) start to the season.

Considerable risk, but Moscow is under pressure - and they have the ice breakers. China is very interested in the increased Arctic traffic. Both the countries are maximising the Northern Sea Route to trade in sanctioned oil. Further, The two nations have embarked on their fourth Joint Arctic Expedition. The four-month expedition is mapping seabeds, and studying currents and sea-ice dynamics around the pole. Some observers have described it as a “reconnaissance and intelligence gathering mission.” Somewhat related, Norway has seized the Russian oceanographic/passenger ship *The Professor Molchanov* off of Barentsburg, Svalbard. The seizure was due to the enforcement of a 2023 arbitral award ordering Russia to pay the Ukrainian company Naftogaz US\$4.22 billion. Needless to say, Russia was not pleased. The Arctic is busy.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/norway-russia-ship-svalbard-naftogaz-b3043940.html>

II. Driven by an increase in hybrid attacks against transportation and energy infrastructure in Germany, the German Government has called out Russia for a series of destabilization attacks.

Drone attacks at Leipzig/Halle Airport, and recent attempts to attack power stations in Germany and Poland, are the most current examples of this campaign. Russia has been busy as Russian linked sabotage in Europe has quadrupled since 2023. In the absence of professional agents, expelled from European countries after the 2022 full scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia has turned to the “gig economy” by recruiting local actors online. These individuals, motivated by ideology or money, are easily recruited via the internet and are “disposable” from Russia's view, and come with deniability. On Wednesday, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen met with NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte to discuss responses to the campaign - both in terms of defence against these activities, and what responses are possible. Voices inside Russia are increasingly calling for direct targeting of European arms manufacturers and Putin is certainly testing NATO/EU.

<https://www.iiss.org/research-paper/2025/08/the-scale-of-russian--sabotage-operations--against-europes-critical--infrastructure>
<https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2026/09/03/uk-summons-russian-diplomat-over-reckless-leipzig-drone-attack>

III. Drought conditions in Europe impacts Rhine/Danube navigation.

Not directly impacting NATO operations, but supply chains, manufacturing and energy production (three nuclear power plants off-line) are impacted. UKR grain shipments, already stressed by RUS attacks on Odessa, were impacted as the Danube route was being used to divert products to the ROU port of Constanta - now greatly reduced.

IV. UKR attacks on Wildberries (RUS Amazon-like business) warehouses.

Following from UKRs Oil infrastructure/capacity related campaign, although they claim Wildberries has a military nexus. Economic impacts are clear. On fuel in RUS, although diesel for the military is still flowing, civilian rationing is spreading. RUS is now importing gasoline from India.

V. The Red Sea / Yemen.

The Houthis are broadening their campaign from targeting Saudi tankers to direct attacks against KSA transport and oil infrastructure and surging against the Gov't of Yemen in the East and West Coast. They desire to capture the area around Al Mokha to better control the Bab Al-Mandab. Also, two cases of piracy in the area. Likely Somali pirates taking advantage of the chaos in the region.

3. Commentary on Central Africa and Africa-wide Strategic Influence

Subject: Assessment of Emerging Security, Health-Security, Diplomatic, Military, Economic, and Strategic Influence Developments Across Africa During Late August 2026

References

A. Open-source reporting collected through 31 August 2026 from Reuters, Associated Press, World Health Organization, Government of Canada, United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Italian Ministry of Defence, Algerian Ministry of National Defence, African and regional security reporting, and associated international sources

B. Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) assessment.

Purpose

A. The purpose of this memorandum is to assess major security, health-security, diplomatic, military, and strategic-influence developments across Africa during the final week of August 2026.

B. Particular attention is given to the attempted military mutiny in Niger, Russia's Africa Corps intervention, Algeria's response, Morocco's Atlantic strategy, the DRC Ebola emergency, Sudan's worsening humanitarian situation, and the evolving approaches of Canada, the United Kingdom, Italy, and China.

Executive Assessment

A. Late-August developments reinforce a continuing pattern: African governments are diversifying external partnerships while institutional fragility and deteriorating security conditions remain major vulnerabilities.

B. Six principal developments are evident:

- (1) The attempted mutiny in Niamey on 29 August represented the most serious internal military challenge to Niger's government since the 2023 coup.
- (2) Russia's Africa Corps directly assisted Nigerien loyalist forces, demonstrating a transition from counterterrorism support toward regime-protection functions.
- (3) Algeria supported Niger during the crisis, including the deployment of four Sukhoi Su-30 fighter aircraft, reinforcing its determination to retain strategic influence along its southern frontier.
- (4) The DRC Ebola outbreak surpassed 6,000 confirmed cases and 2,900 deaths, making it the country's largest recorded Ebola epidemic.
- (5) Sudan continues suffering severe infrastructure degradation, humanitarian displacement, and drone warfare.
- (6) Italy retains a direct military relationship with Niger, while Canada and the United Kingdom increasingly emphasize diplomatic, regional, institutional, and economic engagement.

C. The dominant strategic trend is the growing diversification of African partnerships rather than alignment with any single external power.

I. Niger: Military Mutiny and Regime Stability

A. During 28–29 August, mutinous Nigerien soldiers seized positions at Base 101 near Diori Hamani International Airport and attacked sensitive government locations. Loyalist forces subsequently regained control.

B. The uprising appears linked to deeper dissatisfaction involving battlefield casualties, equipment shortages, force management, soldier welfare, and continued insecurity despite the military government's promise to restore national security.

C. Assessment. The mutiny exposed weaknesses in command cohesion. Although the government survived, unresolved military grievances could generate further instability and distract forces from counterinsurgency operations.

Confidence Assessment: High regarding the mutiny; Moderate regarding the depth of internal military discontent.

II. Russia's Africa Corps and Regime Protection

A. Niger formally requested Russian assistance during the crisis. Africa Corps personnel reportedly supported loyalist forces through ground operations and drone capability.

B. Russia now maintains a broader Ministry of Defence-controlled security network across Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso, replacing many functions previously associated with Wagner.

C. Assessment. The intervention demonstrates that Africa Corps is becoming a regime-security instrument as well as a counterterrorism partner. This provides Moscow with substantial political leverage, although continued jihadist attacks show that protecting governments does not necessarily translate into broader population security.

Confidence Assessment: High.

III. Algeria and Niger

A. Algeria provided direct military support to Niger following the attempted mutiny. On 30 August, acting at Niger's request, Algeria deployed two patrols comprising four Sukhoi Su-30 fighter aircraft to Niamey. The fighters were accompanied by an aerial-refuelling aircraft, identified in aviation reporting as an Ilyushin Il-78. Additional reporting identified an Ilyushin Il-76 military transport aircraft as accompanying the deployment.

B. The deployment is strategically notable because Algeria rarely sends combat aircraft beyond its borders. The approximately 2,600-kilometre distance between northern Algeria and Niamey also demonstrated Algeria's ability to project tactical air power deep into the Sahel with aerial-refuelling support.

C. Despite recent tensions with Sahel military governments, Algeria remains concerned about jihadist mobility, trafficking routes, refugee flows, and instability along its southern frontier.

D. Assessment. Algeria's deployment represents a significant demonstration of strategic intent rather than merely diplomatic solidarity. Algiers is unlikely to accept Russia becoming the sole major external security influence in the central Sahel and appears determined to preserve an independent regional security role. The deployment also demonstrates that Algeria possesses the political willingness and air-power capability to project military support into the Sahel when it considers its strategic interests sufficiently threatened.

Confidence Assessment: High regarding the four Su-30 deployment and refuelling aircraft; Moderate to High regarding its longer-term strategic implications.

IV. Morocco's Atlantic Initiative

A. Morocco continues promoting its Atlantic Initiative to provide landlocked Sahel states with access to Atlantic ports and trade infrastructure through Moroccan transport and logistics networks.

B. The initiative remains at an early implementation stage but could eventually connect Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso more closely with Atlantic markets and Moroccan infrastructure.

C. Assessment. The initiative's immediate security impact is limited, but its long-term geopolitical significance is considerable. If successfully implemented, it could increase Moroccan influence while providing Sahel governments with alternatives to traditional regional trade routes.

Confidence Assessment: Moderate to High regarding strategic intent; Moderate regarding implementation.

V. Alliance of Sahel States Security Environment

A. Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso continue coordinating under the Alliance of Sahel States while facing sustained pressure from JNIM and Islamic State affiliates.

B. Political solidarity remains stronger than demonstrated battlefield effectiveness. The August mutiny also illustrates how persistent insurgent pressure can generate dissatisfaction within national armed forces.

C. Assessment. The AES, “Alliance of Sahel States,” remains politically important but has not yet demonstrated that increased sovereignty and regional military coordination can reverse insurgent momentum.

Confidence Assessment: Moderate to High.

VI. Democratic Republic of the Congo Ebola Emergency

A. Congolese government figures released on 31 August reported 6,041 confirmed Ebola cases and 2,911 deaths. WHO data from 26 August recorded 5,794 cases and 2,786 deaths, reflecting different reporting cut-off dates.

B. Ituri remains the outbreak’s principal centre. Insecurity, displacement, attacks against health personnel, delayed detection, and limited trust in authorities continue obstructing containment.

C. Assessment. The outbreak is now a major regional health-security emergency. Cross-border surveillance, protection of health workers, laboratory capacity, community engagement, and reliable frontline compensation remain essential.

Confidence Assessment: High.

VII. Sudan: Infrastructure Attrition and Humanitarian Pressure

A. Sudan continues experiencing widespread electricity disruption caused by infrastructure damage, drone attacks, limited maintenance, and inadequate government resources.

B. El Obeid remains under severe humanitarian pressure as displaced populations increase and access to food, water, sanitation, healthcare, and shelter deteriorates.

C. Assessment. Sudan is increasingly experiencing systemic attrition. Damage to electricity, water, transportation, health services, and food systems may produce strategic effects even where battlefield front lines change slowly.

Confidence Assessment: High.

VIII. Italy and Niger

A. Italy remains one of the few Western states maintaining a significant bilateral military relationship with Niger through the MISIN mission, which provides training, specialist instruction, infrastructure support, and civil-military cooperation.

B. Italian personnel were not involved in the 29 August fighting and remained secure throughout the crisis.

C. Assessment. Italy's lower-profile bilateral approach has preserved military access where other Western governments lost influence. MISIN therefore provides Rome with unusual strategic visibility inside Niger, although Russia now exercises greater direct security influence.

Confidence Assessment: High.

IX. United Kingdom

A. The United Kingdom continues advising against all travel to Niger and maintains limited direct capacity inside the country.

B. London increasingly relies upon regional counterterrorism partnerships with Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, ECOWAS, and other coastal states rather than substantial military deployments within the AES.

C. Assessment. The British model emphasizes intelligence cooperation, institutional development, and regional resilience. This reduces direct political exposure but limits influence over security decisions inside Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso.

Confidence Assessment: High.

X. Canada and West Africa

A. Canada continues rebalancing its African military commitments, including the planned conclusion of Operations CROCODILE and SOPRANO by mid-2027 and reductions to Operation CALUMET.

B. At the same time, Ottawa is increasing diplomatic and economic engagement in West Africa through trade, governance, development, regional security cooperation, and critical-mineral partnerships.

C. Assessment. Canada appears to be shifting from small dispersed military deployments toward economic, diplomatic, governance, and institutional engagement. Maintaining strong intelligence awareness of Sahel developments will become increasingly important as direct military presence decreases.

Confidence Assessment: High.

XI. China and Africa

A. China continues expanding engagement through infrastructure, energy, technology, maritime cooperation, trade, defence relationships, and institutional partnerships.

B. Beijing's model remains distinct from Russia's. Moscow increasingly derives leverage through regime security and military dependency, while China emphasizes durable economic and institutional access.

C. Assessment. China and Russia may simultaneously expand influence without requiring formal coordination. Their differing models offer African governments multiple alternatives to Western partnerships.

Confidence Assessment: Moderate to High.

XII. Implications for Canada and Western Partners

A. The Niger mutiny demonstrates the need to distinguish between counterterrorism capability and regime-protection capability. Africa Corps successfully helped preserve Niger's government, but insurgent organizations remain operationally effective.

B. Intelligence collection should closely monitor whether Russian forces increasingly assume presidential protection, counter-coup, surveillance, drone, and strategic-infrastructure security roles.

C. Algeria's deployment of four Su-30 fighters demonstrates that North African powers must also be incorporated into assessments of Sahel security competition. Morocco's Atlantic Initiative represents a different, predominantly economic mechanism for expanding regional influence.

D. Italy retains direct military access inside Niger, while Canada and the United Kingdom are increasingly relying upon diplomatic, economic, intelligence, and regional approaches.

XIII. Confidence Assessment

A. High confidence is assessed regarding the Niger mutiny, Africa Corps intervention, Algeria's deployment of four Su-30 fighters, Italy's continuing MISIN presence, current DRC Ebola figures, Canada's announced force reductions, and the UK's current posture toward Niger.

B. Moderate to High confidence is assessed regarding Algeria's longer-term strategic intentions, Russia's increasing political leverage, and Sudan's infrastructure deterioration.

C. Moderate confidence is assessed regarding Niger's future internal military cohesion, the implementation of Morocco's Atlantic Initiative, and the extent to which Russian regime-protection assistance will translate into durable political influence.

XIV. Conclusion

A. Late August 2026 marks an important shift in the central Sahel. The attempted Niger mutiny demonstrates that insecurity is placing pressure not only upon civilian populations but also upon military governments and their armed forces.

B. Russia's Africa Corps intervention significantly increased Moscow's strategic relevance by demonstrating that its partnership extends beyond counterterrorism into regime survival.

C. Algeria's deployment of four Sukhoi Su-30 fighters, supported by an aerial-refuelling aircraft, represents an unusually visible projection of Algerian military power into the Sahel. Together with Morocco's Atlantic Initiative, it demonstrates that regional competition cannot be understood solely through a Russia-West framework.

D. Italy remains a notable Western exception through its continuing military presence in Niger. Canada and the United Kingdom are increasingly emphasizing diplomacy, regional partnerships, institution-building, and economic engagement.

E. The DRC Ebola emergency and Sudan's infrastructure collapse illustrate how health insecurity and state fragility remain as strategically significant as conventional military competition.

F. The dominant trend is increasing dependency on external partners combined with greater diversification of those partnerships. African governments are increasingly selecting partners according to immediate security, economic, diplomatic, and political requirements rather than aligning permanently with a single geopolitical bloc.

G. For Canada and allied governments, continued relevance will depend upon intelligence cooperation, institutional resilience, health security, economic connectivity, counterterrorism capacity-building, critical minerals, and sustained diplomatic engagement rather than recreating the previous Western military footprint.

Overall Confidence Assessment: Moderate to High.

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