



Strategic Digest

December 2021

RNSSC Fellowship Applications

Are you a self-driven critical thinker?

Applications for the 1SL Fellowship and Future Maritime Strategist Fellowship are now open. The deadline is 11 February 2022 for the April 2022 intake.

To find out how the Fellowships will enhance your career and how you will lead RN and RM strategic thinking please read [DIN 07-126](#). Open to all RN/RM military personnel and civil servants.

Upcoming RNSSC Events

More events coming in the New Year.

Happy Holidays!



To contact us with questions and feedback, or to subscribe to the Digest, email: NavyStratPol-

The RNSSC's Strategic Digest is a monthly collection of relevant and thought-provoking articles and podcasts. The Digest aims to keep the Royal Navy (RN) abreast of global strategic developments and promote critical thinking. Topics have been selected due to their relevance to recent or upcoming events, and if they contain newly published innovative thought. This month's edition focuses on maritime capability, including the recently published Defence Committee report, people, and military culture.

The Digest is sent to the RN's senior leadership team, with the request to **please cascade**. If you would like to be added to the mailing list please send an email to NavyStratPol-RNSSC@mod.gov.uk.

On Maritime Capability...

'We're going to need a bigger Navy', House of Commons Defence Committee

Link: [Read summary and full report here](#)

The Committee recommends that defence spending is increased to address issues in the Navy's current and future capabilities. Five key aspects are listed where under funding has affected the RN. The report argues that the fleet is too small and too specialised to meet growing demands.

'The Royal Navy in a Competitive Age', James Rogers

Link: [Read here](#)

A short article suggesting that the Royal Navy has an important role in making 'Global Britain' a reality and in engaging with systematic competitors. Not radical, but a reasonable summary.

With thanks to Commander Andrew Livsey, RN.

'Sea Power Makes Great Power', Jerry Hendrix

Link: [Read here](#)

Hendrix uses historical examples to argue that a country's power is directly related to the size and capability of its naval forces. These case studies are brought to bare on current US strategy and the shrinking size of its Navy, in comparison to the growth of Chinese maritime forces.

With thanks to Stephen Prince, Naval Historical Branch.

'A Slavish Devotion to Forward Presence' has Nearly Broken the US Navy', Robert O. Work

Link: [Read here](#)

Former US Secretary of the Navy, Robert O. Work, examines the history of conceptual development, pointing out that the USN has had no fewer than four new maritime strategies since the end of the Cold War. He examines how great navies need to have a cause to drive them and argues that forward presence has nearly broken the service.

With thanks to Chris Brett, DSTL.

On Russia...

'What Deters Russia', Keir Giles

Link: [Read here](#)

An in-depth analysis, with a good summary, trying to understand the Russian perspective. The key argument runs that while the West understands itself to be at peace with Russia, Russia is at war. Therefore, deterrence is working only so far as curbing escalation, rather than preventing hostilities.

With thanks to Commander Thom Hobbs, RN.

On People and Culture...

'Millennials and Nuclear Weapons: Concerned or Complacent?', Amelia Morgan

Link: [Read here](#)

Global survey finds 54% millennials consider a nuclear attack likely, and yet rank it least important of 12 global issues. The paper tries to understand this apparent contradiction. It is worth reading while bearing in mind this is the RN's pool of potential new submariner recruits.

With thanks to Commander Suzy Conway, RN.

'Losing Small Wars: Why US Military Culture Leads to Defeat', Andrew Milburn

Link: [Read here](#)

Amongst the chatty style and personal recollections of the author there are some key points around the centralised control of operations and emphasis on the need for critical thinking in the officer cohort.

With thanks to CPO Steven Reilly, RN.

'Lying to Ourselves: Dishonesty in the Army Profession', Dr Leonard Wong and Dr Stephen J. Gerras

Link: [Read here](#)

2015 report on the US military, focusing on the culture of trust which needs to exist within any effective military organisation. Recommended outcomes include acknowledgment of organisational and individual fallibility, restraint in compliance checks and for truthful leadership. Despite being almost 7 years old many lessons still ring true.

With thanks to Commander Thom Hobbs, RN.

'How Resilient Organisations Respond to Low Chance – High Impact Events', Oxford Review

Link: [Read here](#)

This article is about how most resilient organisations are able to proactively take action, known as 'organisational improvisation'. It is more about increasing employees' autonomy and ability to act rather than trying to control the situation.

With thanks to Lieutenant Eddie Devine, RN.

On Technological Innovation...

'Necessary Heresies: Challenging the Narratives Distorting UK Defence', Justin Bronk and Dr Jack Watling

Link: Read [RUSI intro here](#) and [Telegraph article here](#) or contact us to access the full paper

These two articles capture the key arguments of this just published Whitehall Paper, namely that novel technologies tend to be over-hyped with crucial nuances lost about the future nature of war.

With thanks to Commander Andrew Livsey, RN.

Find out more about the RNSSC on our webpage: [Royal Navy Strategic Studies Centre | Royal Navy \(mod.uk\)](#)