



Strategic Digest

January 2022

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.

"Being a First Sea Lord's Fellow is one of the most rewarding things I have done in the Navy."
– Lt Oliver Johnson

To contact us with questions and feedback, or to subscribe to the Digest, email:
NavyStratPol-RNSSC@mod.gov.uk

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 the building situation in Ukraine, developments and lessons from our Allies, and some thoughts on the modern UK military.

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 Russia and Ukraine...

Conversation Six: L Freedman and Francois Heisbourg

Link: [Read or listen here](#)

In a short 6 minutes, KCL Professor, Lawrence Freedman, and Francois Heisbourg talk about the build up of Russian troops; discussing its purpose and possible outcomes. With thanks to Stephen Prince, Naval Historical Branch.

'The real trouble with Ukraine', Hew Strachan

Link: [Read here](#)

This article argues that Russia is winning in Ukraine and that Western rhetoric risks the conflict turning to military action; one which would have neither strategy nor exit plan. With thanks to Stephen Prince, Naval Historical Branch.

In case you missed it

'An article by the Defence Secretary on the situation in Ukraine', Ben Wallace

Link: [Read here](#)

The Secretary of State refutes Russia's claims that the US (and NATO) are preparing provocation in eastern Ukraine and argues that Putin has ethnonational motivations over Ukraine.

On Allies...

'Surface Warfare: The Competitive Edge', Commander Naval Surface Forces

Link: [Read here](#)

Vice Admiral Kitchener USN lays out the strategy for the American surface fleet. It aims to have more ready ships available for operations, underpinned by a ten-year plan for capital investment in land-based engineering sites, training systems and general-purpose facilities.

With thanks to Commander René Balletta, French Navy.

‘No Other Option: Politics, policy and industrial considerations in the Canadian Surface Combatant Program’, Richard Shimooka

Link: [Read here](#)

Paper examining the emergence of Canada’s largest public procurement programme, and its progress to date. Shimooka draws out lessons for other defence projects. With thanks to Stephen Prince, Naval Historical Branch.

‘We must make more of renewed UK alliance’, Professor Rory Medcalf (Australian National University)

Link: [Read here](#)

Encouraged by AUKUS, the author calls for deeper UK-Aus security ties in the IAP, giving practical, tangible examples of things to do. He also notes Malaysia as a swing state for China and prompts greater engagement there, perhaps through FPDA, to keepni in the western camp.

With thanks to Captain Kevin Rowlands, RN.

‘What to Expect From the 2022 French Presidency if the EU’, Georgina Wright

Link: [Read here](#)

Wright explains some of Macron’s priorities in the first 6 months of the French EU presidency, including boosting the C-19 economic recovery and collectively responding to climate change. He wants to open discussions on Europe’s external borders and the Schengen system.

With thanks to Commander René Balletta, French Navy.

On the UK Military...

‘The Elusion of Critique: On Developing Critical Approaches in Defence Discourse’, Lt Col Matt Lewis

Link: [Read here](#)

This article is about defence professional military education and how we think. Lewis emphasises the importance of critical thinking in routine military behaviour.

With thanks to Commander Andrew Livsey, RN.

‘More Sensors Than Sense’, Jack Watling

Link: [Read here](#) and accessed with the MOD T&F [log-in details](#)

Jack Watling on why ideas of seamless, interconnected, "all-domain" command-and-control are overly optimistic. Not least, we gather much more information than we can use. This usefully counters some of the more excited suggestions that the battlefield is about to become transparent.

With thanks to Commander Andrew Livsey, RN.

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