



Strategic Digest

February 2022

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 continued thinking around Ukraine, elements of defence procurement and recently published strategies from the UK on space and from the US on the Indo-Pacific.

The Digest is sent to the RN's senior leadership team, with the request to **please cascade**. To contact us with questions, feedback or to be added to the mailing list please send an email to NavyStratPol-RNSSC@mod.gov.uk.



On Ukraine...

'Legal Principles Matter in Defense of Democracies', David Scheffer

Link: [Read here](#)

A short, but timely article to do with the legal basis for military action under the auspices of the UN Charter, making the point that Ukraine not being a NATO member is not in and of itself a blocker for military force being used by the Alliance to counter Russian aggression. Parallels also with Chinese sabre rattling over Taiwan.

With thanks to Lt Commander Oliver Clark, RN.

'If New Looks could kill: Russia's military capability in 2022', James Hackett, Nick Childs and Douglas Barrie

Link: [Read here](#)

A quick overview of Russia's ground, naval and air forces and what capabilities have been developed since 2008.

With thanks to Captain Kevin Rowlands, RNSSC.

'How Russia's Black Sea Fleet Could Change the Equation in Ukraine', Dr Sidharth Kaushal and Sam Cranny-Evans

Link: [Read here](#)

Kaushal and Cranny-Evans use examples, including Russia's Black Sea Fleet preventing Ukrainian ships returning to their ports during the 2014 annexation of Crimea, to argue that Russia's Fleet, theoretically, has the ability to challenge NATO forces attempting to enter the Black Sea and Mediterranean. They also describe the ways Russia might go about doing this.

With thanks to Dr Ed Hampshire, Naval Historical Branch.

Briefing

'Russia, the West, and Economic Statecraft', IISS

Friday 25 February 1000-1100

Link: [Sign-up here](#) (does not work on MODNet, personal device required)

IISS experts discuss the unprecedented economic sanctions Western countries have promised to level on Russia; how effective they are likely to be, and whether Russia could use its role as global energy supplier to inhibit their impact.

On Procurement...

‘Global defence spending – the impact of inflation’, Fenella McGerty

Link: [Read here](#)

Article looking at the impacts on defence budgets if high inflation rates persist as they have since 2021. McGerty looks at the different dynamics operating in different global regions.

With thanks to Captain Kevin Rowlands, RNSSC.

‘BAE Systems in the UK Economy: Public Relations on a Strong Data Base’, Trevor Taylor

Link: [Read here](#)

Taylor explores the implications of a recently published report on BAE Systems’ contribution to the UK economy. The article outlines how the company fits into different aspects of governmental agendas, such as levelling-up and the Covid recovery.

With thanks to Stephen Prince, Naval Historical Branch.

On Climate Change...

‘Green Defence: the defence and military implications of climate change for Europe’, Ben Barry, Shiloh Fetzek and Caroline Emmett

Link: [Read here](#)

Research report looking into some of the challenges armed forces have to reduce greenhouse emissions without disarming. The report assesses the implications for European armed forces operating in a world where climate change is an accelerator and multiplier of disasters, instability, and conflict.

With thanks to Captain Kevin Rowlands, RNSSC.

On the High North...

‘UK strategy for the High North’, RAND

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

Looking to 2050, RAND make four key recommendations; a cross-governmental strategy of engagement with High North stakeholders and nations, reinforcing naval cooperation with relevant countries not limited to the Arctic, prioritise scientific research and collaboration, and privilege soft power influence to engage with Arctic-focused fora (eg. the Arctic Council).

With thanks to Commander Louis de la Riviere.

On the UK’s Space Strategy...

In case you missed it

‘National Space Strategy’

Link: [Read here](#)

The first UK Space Strategy, jointly produced by MOD and BEIS, reflects the importance of space to both UK defence and business. The space sector is worth over £16.4 billion a year and employs over 45,000 people. The strategy focuses on strengthening science and technology, defence, regulation, and diplomacy and identifies five goals to do this.

With thanks to Dr Ed Hampshire, Naval Historical Branch.

'Chief of the Air Staff Defence Space Strategy speech'

Link: [Read here](#)

Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston outlines some of the defence considerations in the National Space Strategy, and sets out the three strategic defence objectives; to protect and defence interest in and through space, to integrate space operations into multi-domain operations, and to develop and upskill cadre of space experts across the three services.
With thanks to Commander Oliver de-Silva, RN.

'UK Defence Space Strategy finally blasts-off', Tim Robinson

Link: [Read here](#)

This commentary piece on the Strategy breaks down some of the key elements and possible practical meanings of the policy document. It looks at the future of programmes such as Artemis and the RAF's Carbonite 2 satellite.
With thanks to Stephen Prince, Naval Historical Branch.

On the US...

In case you missed it

'Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States'

Link: [Read fact sheet and full document here](#)

This outlines President Biden's 'free and open' vision to strengthen the United States' presence in the Indo-Pacific Region. The central focus is sustained and creative collaboration with allies, and partners within the region and beyond. The Action Plan from page 15 starts to outline how the strategy will be implemented.
With thanks to Stephen Prince, Naval Historical Branch and Captain Kevin Rowlands, RNSSC.

'Lost at Sea; The Dangerous Decline of American Naval Power', Kori Schake

Link: [Read here](#)

This article focuses on the rising threat of China and argues that the contest between "Beijing and Washington will increasingly become a struggle for naval power."
With thanks to Brigadier Duncan Forbes, RM.

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