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## Strategic Digest

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April 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 content being relevant or innovative. This April edition includes articles on ongoing analysis of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, its implications on other parts of the globe, and on climate change and defence.

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](mailto:NavyStratPol-RNSSC@mod.gov.uk).



### RUSI's Sea Power Digest

The Royal United Services Institute, UK defence and security think tank, produce a tailored Seapower Digest every quarter for the Royal Navy. Spring's edition looks at the implications of Russia's invasion on NATO's navies, through the lenses of past articles exploring relationships with Moscow.

Link: [Read all editions here](#)



### On Russia...

#### **'Operation Z: The Death Throes of an Imperial Delusion', Jack Watling and Nick Reynolds**

Link: [Read here](#)

RUSI's special report examines how challenges facing Moscow since its invasion of Ukraine are reshaping Russian policy. It is predominantly based on on-the-ground observation in Ukraine, interviews, and Russian government documents. It concludes that Russia is now preparing for a protracted conflict, in a diplomatic, economic, and military sense. The authors speculate that 9<sup>th</sup> May (Russian 'Victory Day') could see the announcement of Russia moving to a full war footing. With thanks to Dr Ed Hampshire & Stephen Prince, Naval Historical Branch.

#### **'Reconsidering Russian Maritime Warfare', Michael B. Peterson**

Link: [Read here](#)

This article gives a good description of Russian naval strategy, capability, philosophy, and ambition. Peterson argues that to counter the maritime threat of Russia, NATO should be investing in ISR (intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance) capabilities. With thanks to Commander Louis de La Riviere, French Navy.

#### **'Chain of Negligence caused the loss of the Moskva cruiser', Tayfun Ozberk**

Link: [Read here](#)

Ozberk looks in detail about the events leading up to the sinking of the Russian flagship, *Moskva*. The article tries to understand conflicting information and speculation.

With thanks to Captain Paul Little, RN Honorary Officer.

### **‘Economic warfare and Mançur Olson: Insights for great power conflict’, Mark Harrison**

Link: [Read here](#)

Harrison uses analysis of the impact of economic warfare in the Second World War to consider potential impacts of sanctions on modern-day Russia.

With thanks to Stephen Prince, Naval Historical Branch.

### **‘Why the West is principally responsible for the Ukrainian crisis’, John Mearsheimer and Sir Adam Roberts**

Link: Read [Mearsheimer's article](#) and [Roberts' rebuff](#)

Best read together, these two Economist articles present opposing arguments on conventional deterrence and offensive realism. The original article argues that Russia’s invasion is a reaction to NATO expansion into what it would consider to be its ‘sphere of influence’. Sir Roberts acknowledges this influencing factor but explores additional themes which led to Putin’s decision.

With thanks to Lt Col Mick Trafford, RM, 1SL Fellow.

## On Other Regions...

### **‘The UK’s Russian Ship Ban and the Need for Effective Solutions for UK Ports’, Steve Osborne and Clara Guest**

Link: [Read here](#)

The article highlights the transient nature of international shipping, the limitations of domestic legislation, and the requirement for joined-up multilateral action to limit Russian efforts to combat sanctions. It also talks to the role the RN may play in combatting such sanctions, including understanding AIS blackspots and ship-to-ship transfers.

With thanks to Lt Ben White, RN, 1SL Fellow.

### **‘Canada’s Artic Security Moves to Forefront After Ukraine Invasion’, the Defence Post**

Link: [Read here](#)

The West having broken off cooperation in the Artic with Russia, Canada is now scrambling to fortify its defences. The article presents different arguments about Russian current and future activities in the Artic.

With thanks to Captain Kevin Rowlands, RNSSC.

### **‘Mare Nostrum: The Franco-Greek Defence Treaty’, Lorris Beverelli**

Link: [Read here](#)

Currently a side-lined issue, this article examines the background to and implications of the September 2021 Franco-Greek Treaty which is directed at Turkey and guarantees French support in case of an attack from Ankara against Athens. It was drawn up after a period of tensions in the second half of 2020.

With thanks to Captain Kevin Rowlands, RNSSC.

### **‘IISS Defence Analysis Briefing – World Defence Show & IISS Riyadh Defense Forum’, IISS**

Link: [Read here](#)

Report on two events hosted in Saudi Arabia in March, reflecting the priorities for the Gulf States; including continuing to focus on combat aircraft requirements and the threat of ballistic and cruise missiles. It also notes that naval acquisitions are gaining momentum.

With thanks to Mary Thompson, RNSSC.

## On Climate Change...

**‘Greening Defence: The UK Armed Forces Strategic Approach to Climate Change’, Dr Sarah Ashbridge and Major Alistair Beard**

Link: [Read here](#)

An analysis of the MOD’s recently published ‘Climate Change and Sustainability Strategic Approach’ (CCSSA). They commend the CCSSA in its ambition and all-encompassing scope but criticise the lack of detail on how to achieve its aims.

With thanks to Major Alistair Beard, British Army.

**‘The shipping giant banking on a greener fuel’, Adrienne Murray**

Link: [Read here](#)

Shipping giant, Maersk, has ordered 12 ocean-going ships which run on methanol, which they hope to help kick-start the market for the greener source of fuel. The article explains how green methanol has a low carbon footprint across the whole production process.

With thanks to Captain Kevin Rowlands, RN.

**‘Could the Ukraine crisis accelerate a longer-term policy shift away from fossil fuels?’, Shiloh Fetzek**

Link: [Read here](#)

IISS analysis on the recently published Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC) [latest assessment report](#) and how it has been overshadowed by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Fetzek argues that Russia is forcing the West into greater energy independence.

With thanks to Mary Thompson, RNSSC.

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