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## Strategic Digest

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May 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 – it does not reflect RN views or policy. Topics have been selected due to their content being relevant or innovative. The May edition covers continued developments on wider consequences on the war in Ukraine, Russian capabilities, and some new reflections on the Falklands conflict.

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).



### **Lunchtime Lecture: 'Has the war in Ukraine changed the geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific Region?'**

The RNSSC held its first lunchtime lecture at NCHQ on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> May. Dr Alessio Patalano, who delivered the lecture, is Professor of War and Strategy in the East Asia in the Department of War Studies at King's College London, as well as an RNSSC Visiting Fellow. He explored reactions (or lack of) to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in the region from countries such as the US, China, and Japan. This will be the first in a series of lectures so please look out for future invites.

Link: Listen back to the recording or read the transcript [here](#).



### On the war in Ukraine...

#### **'Ukraine Symposium – Neutral State Access to Ukraine's Food Exports', James Kraska**

Link: [Read here](#)

A topic frequently in the news recently, Kraska looks into the different options and implications of international law on neutral states which rely on Ukraine for food.

With thanks to Professor Beatrice Hauser, University of Glasgow, RNSSC Visiting Fellow.

#### **'A year of hunger: how the Russia-Ukraine war is worsening climate-linked food shortages', Ro McFarlane, Nenad Naumovski and Shawn Somerset**

Link: [Read here](#)

On a similar topic to the article above, this piece looks at the potential impact of food shortages on civil unrest, which it argues, will be compounded by climate change impacts.

With thanks to Cdr Tom Scott, RN, 1SL Fellow.

**‘What If the War in Ukraine Doesn’t End? The Global Consequences of a Long Conflict’, Liana Fix and Michael Kimmage**

Link: [Read here](#) or [on MODNet](#)

Fix and Kimmage argue that it is likely neither side will achieve as much as it wishes, which therefore could lead to “a cycle of Russian wars in Ukraine”. They explore the grim consequences of what this eventuality might look like and make recommendations of what Western policymakers should do.

With thanks to Stephen Prince, Naval Historical Branch.

**‘What comes next: a precarious peace?’, Kevin Rowlands**

Link: [Read here](#)

A short think-piece on the role of navies in the Ukraine-Russia conflict and how NATO might use their maritime forces following the war to influence the peace.

With thanks to Capt Kevin Rowlands, RNSSC.

**‘How Ukraine will change Europe’s Indo-Pacific ambitions’, Alice Billon-Galland and Hans Kundnani**

Link: [Read here](#)

This article explores how European nations may rethink priorities in the Indo-Pacific as a result of the Ukraine conflict. They argue that France and the UK should work closely on future deployments to the area and should consider careful alignment of the EU with NATO for division of labour.

With thanks to Capt Kevin Rowlands, RNSSC.

[On Russia’s military capabilities...](#)

**‘The ‘Kalibrization’ of the Russian Fleet’, Joshua Menks and Michael B. Petersen**

Link: [Read here](#)

Menks and Petersen try to address the lack of literature on the offensive role of Russian naval forces. The article covers the RFN’s use of precision strike, conflict periodization, and naval operations against critical infrastructure.

With thanks to René Balletta, RN, RNSSC Associate Fellow.

**‘Antiship Missile Lessons from Sinking of the Moskva’, Alan D. Zimm**

Link: [Read here](#)

An interesting and short article about anti-ship missile defence that touches on some really important issues about the number of missiles needed to neutralise a vessel and how it works. It has relevance, not just for those in the RN who might be firing missiles, but also for those (in large part, engineers) who would be dealing with the results of a missile hit.

With thanks to Cdr Andrew Livsey, RN, Hudson Fellow.

**‘The Overlooked Reason Russia’s Invasion Is Floundering: Russia has failed to understand the importance of air power’, Phillips Payson O’Brien and Edward Stringer**

Link: [Read here](#)

After two months, Russian forces are still fighting for control of Ukrainian skies, despite extensive experience in Syria, Georgia and Chechnya. The article argues that the key reason for failure is effective Ukrainian opposition. It goes as far to say that Ukrainian’s have more sophisticated understanding of air operations than some NATO nations.

With thanks to Stephen Prince, Naval Historical Branch.

[On Maritime and Defence Challenges...](#)

### **‘The future of UK defence: In conversation with David Williams and Admiral Sir Tony Radakin’**

Link: [Listen here](#) (or other podcast providers)

An hour-long podcast looking at the themes of the Integrated Review one year on. Covering many topics from a broad lens, it provides an insight into how MOD military and civilian leadership work together at the top of the department.

With thanks to Marco Hurst, RNSSC Future Maritime Strategist.

### **‘The International Commanders Respond’, USNI Proceedings**

Link: [Read here](#)

The US Naval Institute asked the commanders of the world’s navies, “How is your nation’s maritime security environment changing? Have new regional threats, climate change, or the COVID-19 pandemic caused you to alter your future assumptions? How is the changing environment impacting operations, budget, and personnel policy for your Navy and/or Coast Guard?” Here are their responses.

With thanks to Cdr René Balletta, RN, RNSSC Associate Fellow.

### On Falklands 40...

### **‘The Logistics of Ascension Island, 1982’, the Naval Review**

Link: [Read here](#)

This article reassesses logistics during the Falklands War. The oft quoted statement that “amateurs talk tactics, but professionals talk logistics” is, of course, wrong. Professionals talk about both and understand how the two interact. What we can say is that tactics without logistics is building castles in the sky.

With thanks to Cdr Andrew Livsey, RN, Hudson Fellow.

### **‘Falklands Conflict: A pivotal conflict’, the Imperial War Museums**

Link: [Watch here](#) (on YouTube)

The IWM have produced a series of short films the Falklands War. Episode 4 ‘How British forces retook the Falklands’ looks at each side’s strategy and what mistakes were made before a final outcome.

With thanks to Mary Thompson, RNSSC.

*Find out more about the RNSSC on our [webpage](#) or [DefNet page](#).*