



---

## Strategic Digest

---

June 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; they do not reflect the views of the RN or MOD. The June edition covers broadening implications of the Russo-Ukrainian War, optimism and concerns over AUKUS, and the growing potential of open source research.

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).



### On Implications of Ukraine...

#### **'The New Arctic Geopolitics', Wilfrid Greaves**

Link: [Read here](#)

Greaves looks at how the Russo-Ukrainian War has altered international cooperation in the Arctic and argues that it threatens to undo 30 years of progress to maintain a rules-based system. He goes on to suggest Russia will begin to align more with China's strategy in the North Pole. With thanks to Capt Kevin Rowlands, RNSSC.

#### **'The Militarization of Russian Polar Politics', Mathieu Boulègue**

Link: [Read here](#)

Not dissimilar to the above article, Boulègue explores more of Russia's fear of encirclement in the Arctic. He assesses both the Arctic and Antarctic as theatres of geopolitical confrontation, and how these risks might be mitigated.

With thanks to Capt Kevin Rowlands RN, RNSSC.

#### **'The Army Risks Reasoning Backwards in Analyzing Ukraine, David Johnson**

Link: [Read here](#)

The US Army are stress-testing their future warfighting concepts through lessons learnt in Ukraine. Johnson argues that realities in Ukraine are challenging the Department of Defense's thinking about how the different domains contribute to military activities.

With thanks to Cdr Thomas Hobbs RN, 1SL Fellow.

#### **'A new energy policy for Europe: The significance of Ukraine', Dr Alexander Lanoszka, James Rogers and Patrick Triglavcanin**

Link: [Read here](#)

This report looks at the reliance of EU countries on Russian energy, and how the weaning off process has started. It argues that Ukraine, having the second largest gas reserves in Europe, could be a potential partner to meet EU demand.

With thanks to Capt Kevin Rowlands RN, RNSSC.

## On AUKUS...

### **‘AUKUS: More than meets the eye’, Jada Fraser**

Link: [Read here](#)

This article describes the multi-layered security arrangements in the Indo-Pacific as a series of “minilateral” groupings, which Fraser views as positive for international security. In the “minilateral” category Fraser includes AUKUS, the Quad and the Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement, as well as other less formalised cooperation.

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

### **‘“Red Line For US & Australia” – China Counters Military Base Claims By Accusing AUKUS Of Inciting Arms Race’, the EurAsian Times**

Link: [Read here](#)

A useful summary of AUKUS reactions to the framework agreement on security cooperation between China and the Solomon Islands, which was signed earlier this year.

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

## On Open Source Research...

### **‘The Future of Open Source Intelligence for UK National Security’, Ardi, Alexander Harris and Joe Byrne**

Link: [Download here](#)

This longer paper aims to inform future development of government policy on publicly available information and open source intelligence. If you have less time, recommendations from page 45 are worth a read and they include suggestions of developing a government led forum for open source information sharing, and more investment in infrastructure, collection and analysis of freely available intelligence.

With thanks to Mary Thompson, RNSSC.

### **‘Sea Mines Could Prevent Ukraine Grain Shipments For Months’, Howard Altman**

Link: [Read here](#)

A good example of open source research; this article looks at Black Sea mining operations and includes useful demonstrative maps. Ukraine operations are a strong example of use of mines in protection of a sovereign coast.

With thanks to WO2 Daniel Dean RN, 1SL Fellow.

## On Maritime Warfighting...

### **‘Feedback On French Navy High Intensity Exercise POLARIS’, Martin Manaranche**

Link: [Read here](#)

This article provides a good summary of a recent major French naval exercise. It draws out some of the implications of modern high intensity combat; that it happens very fast, and losses are high. It also touches on some procurement issues with relevance for the RN.

With thanks to Cdr Andrew Livsey RN, Hudson Fellow.

## On Public Opinion...

### **‘2022 Annual Survey of UK Public Opinion on Foreign Policy and Global Britain’, Sophia Gaston**

Link: [Read here](#)

The British Foreign Policy Group (BFPG) has just published its annual survey report. A couple of the key findings were that the public has a low level of trust for the UK Government to make foreign policy decisions, and that AUKUS was viewed as boosting global reputation. With thanks to Capt Richard Farrow RM, Future Maritime Strategist.

*Find out more about the RNSSC on our [webpage](#), [DefNet page](#), or follow us on [Linked In](#).*