



Strategic Digest

July 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) whole force 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 July edition covers Allied strategies in the Indo-Pacific, and some rethinking happening in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

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.



Lunchtime Lecture Series

The RNSSC is running a monthly lecture series on maritime defence and strategy topics. Academic experts challenge our perceptions on the key problems faced by the Royal Navy today and make predictions about what problems will be faced in the future. Invites go out to everyone subscribed to this Digest.

'Between Red Dragon and America Eagle: What does the White Ensign mean to China after 100 years of the CCP?'

In late June Dr Matthew Heaslip, Lecturer in Naval History at Portsmouth University and RNSSC Visiting Fellow, spoke about the ever-evolving relationship between the UK and China. He noted how Chinese maritime strategies are reminiscent of the UK's in c.1680 to 1880, and that China currently views the RN in a neutral light.

Link: Recording and slides [here](#)

'Climate Change, Net Zero & the Future Character of Military Operations'

Last week Visiting RNSSC Fellow Dr Duncan Depledge, Loughborough University, spoke about some of the challenges the RN faces from climate change. He also outlined some of the different options for how the RN, and wider Defence, might be able to reduce carbon emissions.

Link: Recording [here](#)



[On Approaches to Asia...](#)

'NATO knows Asia is vital to protecting global security', Bill Hayton

Link: [Read here](#)

Hayton outlines NATO's stance on Asia as he sees it; NATO is not intending to expand into Asia but that members are concerned about Asian security threats expanding into Europe and North America.

With thanks to Capt Kevin Rowlands, RNSSC.

'How Credible Is NATO's Pivot to China?', Jagannath Panda

Link: [Read here](#)

This article is a rather more critical take on NATO's recently published 2022 Strategic Concept. Panda argues that NATO's internal debates will complicate what should be quick and decisive action.

With thanks to Capt Kevin Rowlands, RNSSC.

'Global Britain's strategic problem East of Suez', William D James

Link: [Read here on MODNet](#) and [read with journal subscription here](#)

The Changing Character of War Centre has produced this journal article arguing for different causation behind Britain's withdrawing from Arabian Peninsula and Southeast Asia bases in the 1960s and 70s – such bases were consuming more security than they were generating. James points to how these findings are relevant for modern day policy makers.

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

'Austin Emphasizes Partnership as Path for Peace in Indo-Pacific', Jim Garamone

Link: [Read here](#)

Speaking at June's Shangri-La Dialogue, US Secretary of Defense Lloyd J Austin III reemphasised the US' commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. The article provides an analysis of a speech clearly aimed at US allies, and potential allies, in the region.

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

'Dangerous Straits: Wargaming a Future Conflict over Taiwan', Stacie Pettyjohn, Becca Wasser and Chris Dougherty

Link: [Read here](#)

This wargame carried out by a partnership of American companies has used lessons the PLA might have learnt from Ukraine to study what could happen in the event of a Chinese strike on Taiwan in 2027. The results found that there would be no quick victory for either side, and how any conflict would quickly escalate so that neither China or US has control over the consequences.

With thanks to Cdr Andrew Livsey RN, RNSSC Associate Fellow.

On Technological Advance...

'Israeli navy knocks out Hezbollah drones', Australian Naval Institute

Link: [Read here](#)

Short article about the incident which speaks to the current threat of drones, their capabilities, and the potential to counter them.

With thanks to Cdr Andrew Livsey RN, RNSSC Associate Fellow.

On Adjustments after Ukraine...

'Global Britain in a divided world; Testing the ambitions of the Integrated Review', Sir Robin Niblett KCMG

Link: [Read here](#)

This research paper assesses the IR's objective for 'Global Britain in a Competitive Age' which include upholding international order, building international resilience and strengthening the UK's economic competitiveness. It argues that the UK government has meet some of the objectives so far but falls short on building global resilience. The third section of the report outlines what could be done to meet the aims.

With thanks to Stephen Prince, Naval Historical Branch.

'Inside the Pentagon slugfest over the future of the fleet', Lara Seligman, Lee Hudson and Paul McLeary

Link: [Read here](#)

Politico article on American ship building and discussions over how many platforms are needed to buy in the new fiscal year beginning in October.

With thanks to Capt Kevin Rowlands, RNSSC.

'A False Dawn for Liberalism? Why the War in Ukraine May Not Revive the West', Alexander Cooley and Daniel Nexon

Link: [Access here](#)

Written from an American perspective, this article illustrates that the source of power in the liberal international system is derived from a coalition of states and institutions with shared values, rather than hegemonic economic, military, or industrial power alone. It reminds the reader of the importance of multilateralism for liberal democracies.

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

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