



# CHACR TAKE AWAY NEWSLETTER: ISSUE: 1

23-27 MARCH 2020

## INTRODUCTION

This is the first of our new weekly CHACR Take Away Newsletters, which we will issue regularly from now on. In these newsletters, you will find links to latest products by CHACR, but also links to key reports and studies by external experts and institutions which we think you should pay attention to. The aim is to continue advancing the mandate of CHACR to enhance the conceptual component of fighting power for the British Army. **The views expressed or studies shared in this document in no way represent the official views of the British Army, Ministry of Defence or any components thereof, but only that of its authors and are shared to stimulate thinking and discussions.**

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

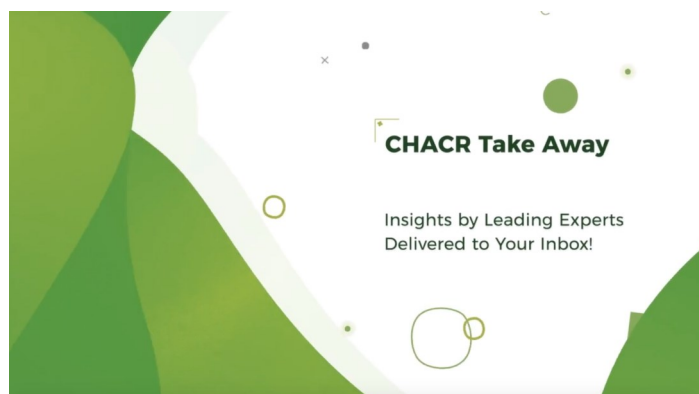
As the CHACR re-launches its website, amidst the fast-moving spread of the Coronavirus, it is our intention to keep those who follow us as up-to-date as possible on wider global developments of significance. President Trump has called COVID-19 'The Chinese Virus', but now the WHO is warning that the epicentre, having shifted from China to Europe, is shifting again, this time from Europe to the US. As the dynamics of the disease ebb and flow, swell and recede, so, most likely, will the traditional dynamics of international balances and relationships. News and newsletters will, inevitably, be full of reflections upon the effects of the virus; but there will also need to be insights into all of those other events that, despite the ravages of COVID-19, continue in the background, driving and affecting the dynamics of global events and relationships. We hope that you find this newsletter informative and useful.

Maj Gen (Ret) Dr Andrew Sharpe

## CHACR TAKE AWAY VIDEO BRIEFINGS

CHACR is known widely for its high quality events featuring leading experts. You do not need to miss out if you are deployed or working from home or in a facility away from the RMAF. From now on, we will release a new video discussion or lecture every week, giving you the chance to watch them whenever you get the chance. The first one features a discussion with Michael Stephens, Associate Fellow at RUSI, with our own Dr Ziya Meral, on current developments in Saudi Arabia. The country has been going through a historic transformation domestically but also pursuing a more assertive foreign policy under the leadership of the Crown Prince, Muhammad bin Salman. Stephens and Meral discuss the

background to these issues and try to untangle what they mean for the UK. Click on the image or [here](#) to watch it on our YouTube channel, and do follow the channel for more videos.



## EXPLOITING A PANDEMIC

While the world is trying to respond to a historic health crisis, some continue to see a golden opportunity. As [Elisabeth Braw noted in her column](#), the crisis is exposing the West's weakness and making us vulnerable for exploitation. In fact, [a recent EU report pointed out](#) to an ongoing Russian misinformation campaigns targeting Europe now, to "exacerbate confusion, panic and fear, and to prevent people from accessing reliable information about the virus and public-safety provisions." A good civilian initiative, Coronavirus Fact-Checking Alliance, [www.poynter.org](http://www.poynter.org), has done a good job responding to some of these. Here is a good [recent study capturing how disinformation works](#).

## US MARINES TRANSFORMATION

The strategic landscape has changed in US military thinking substantially. After a decade of focusing on counter terrorism and counter insurgency, discussions on peer and near peer adversaries are turning into concrete steps in military planning. [In this report](#), the WSJ captures the transformation of US Marines as they prepare for scenarios of conflicts in the western Pacific, including discussions on decommissioning of tanks, cutting back on aircraft and shrinking numbers.

## HOW THE VIRUS GOT OUT

This is a [remarkable report with fascinating infographics](#) by the NYT. It starts tracking movement patterns from the first known cases clustered around a market in Chinese city of Wuhan, and then spread across China as hundreds of millions people travelled back to their hometowns for the Lunar New Year. Telecom data reveals the scope of movement, and why by the time the pandemic was acknowledged and became a global issue, it was too late to contain it even by historic steps to stop international travel.

## MOBILISING FOR A PANDEMIC

It is no surprise to see how the British Army is actively contributing to the responses to the pandemic. This current crisis will have implications for our future, planning, with a lot of lessons learned from our experience and that of militaries around the world. It is worth paying attention to how militaries are adapting to the challenges. [This Economist report](#) captures some of the responses given by militaries around the world. [This report focuses on expanding US military involvement](#) at the domestic front. Forces.net also has [a report on how militaries are responding around the world](#).

## WORLD AFTER THE VIRUS

There is going to be a flood of articles on the world after the coronavirus pandemic. The reflections of the moment include a wide range of speculation from 'nothing will ever be the same', to 'pandemic will cause damage but we will return to normality. The following two reflections are worth to read through. [One from Israeli thinker, author, Yuval Noah Hariri](#), pointing out to tension between state and state, nationalism vs global solidarity. The other one [by the European External Action Service](#), observing "whoever is best at organising the response, quickly drawing on lessons learnt from around the world and communication successfully will come out strongest."

## PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT



## HYBRID WARS: AN AMNESIA?

In military thinking, the terms Hybrid War and Grey-Zone activity have gained traction over the last few years. They have entered common wisdom of military thought and are now widely accepted by military and political systems all over the world. It has been argued that the emergence of Hybrid Wars and Grey-Zone activities has been a significant game-changer in the way current and, potentially, future wars are and will be conducted. [In a thought-provoking article](#) published by the US Naval War College Donal Stoker and Craig Whiteside challenge this view. They argue that these forms of conflict are not new at all and that the emergence of these terms shows a lack of historical understanding and also a misunderstanding of the (Clausewitzian) relationship between war and peace and thus the nature of war. In essence, they argue that the adoption of these terms by the military and political spheres is a failure of strategic thinking.

## TECHNOLOGY AND WARFARE

New technologies, such as artificial intelligence, cyber capabilities, and drones will likely change how and who we fight. Uncertainty surrounding the development, acquisition and application of these technologies often prompts predictions of Terminator-style destruction. [In this article](#), C. Anthony Pfaff discusses what makes a technology disruptive, and how technologies impact the military profession. He argues that technological development cannot be stifled, and the uncertainty surrounding the use of these technologies can be managed through existing ethical frameworks.

## THINGS TO KEEP ON YOUR RADAR SCREENS

- **Lessons on a Clash with Iran**

[Interesting article by Eric Brewer and Henry Roma](#) on US policies on Iran and the risky escalation of attacks we continue to observe and what might happen next, especially if Trump wins the next election.

- **Armed Groups in Libya**

A robust study of [how Libyan armed groups developed since 2014](#). It explores their revenue sources, and points out to options for mitigating further conflict.

- **Space: NATO's latest frontier**

NATO is giving more attention to the outer domain. [In this article, Dr Paulauskas breaks](#) down why the space matters for the alliance, and what role NATO could and should play in this arena.

- **India-Pakistan Border**

[An article](#) linking the strike against Qassem Soleimani with a potential escalation on the India-Pakistan border.

- **Shoigu on the Road**

Russian Defence Minister, Sergei Shoigu travelled to Damascus this week to deliver a message from the President Putin. [Here is a breakdown on the agenda for the trip.](#)

- **Hypersonic Missiles**

Pentagon says it has successfully [tested hypersonic missiles.](#)

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

On 19 March 2003, President George W. Bush addressed the US nation and announced that Operation Iraqi Freedom had begun. [As President Bush stated in his address](#): “The people of the United States and our friends and allies will not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder”. The first phase of the war, which included major combat operations, was officially declared over by President Bush on 1 May 2003. Saddam Hussein was captured on 13 December 2003, but the conflict continued, albeit in a different form.

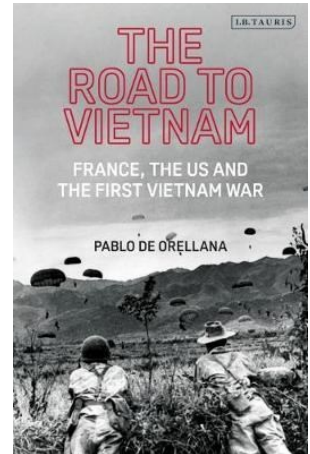
## CRISIS MANAGEMENT: LESSONS FROM THE PAST

Naturally, the Corona virus crisis is keeping everybody occupied at the moment. There have been considerable differences in how the world's countries have tried to tackle this crisis. [In a series of blog entries Dr Jonathan Boff has argued](#) that history can give us some clues on how to manage this crisis and how wartime crisis management (non-medical!) can support us and the world's leaders in these difficult times.

## WHAT CHACR TEAM IS READING

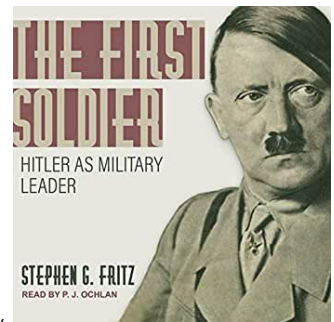
**Pablo de Orellana.** *The Road to Vietnam.*

The long and devastating Vietnam War has been studied in great depth by historians, from numerous angles: political, military and social. In *The Road to Vietnam*, international relations scholar Pablo de Orellana uses previously classified material, including diplomatic papers and briefing notes, to present fresh analysis of the diplomatic misunderstandings and failures that lead to conflict. Focussing on the first Indochina War, (1946-1954), de Orellana explains how a small French colony in distant Southeast Asia was seen as a grave threat by Cold War era American policy makers. He shows how the origins of the conflict stemmed from Vietnam's colonial history and explores how American efforts to curb the influence – both real and perceived - of the Soviet Union and China escalated into a catastrophic counterinsurgency. Written in an engaging style and structured in reverse chronological order, the book gives readers an understanding of how policy processes developed an inexorable momentum towards conflict.



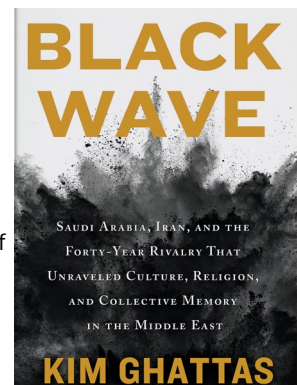
**Stephen G Fritz,** *The First Soldier. Hitler as Military Leader*

It is often said that Hitler lost Germany the Second World War. His uncompromisingly radical goals, impulsiveness, tendency to pursue several objectives simultaneously, and inherent mistrust propelled the country towards humiliating defeat. In this thought-provoking book, Stephen G. Fritz, an expert on Germany in the Second World War, argues that the question of Hitler's military leadership needs further scrutiny. Dispelling the notion that Hitler's strategy was inadequate and ill-informed, Fritz shows how it could be considered rational, coherent and competent. In the book, Hitler emerges as a complex and nuanced military leader who cannot easily be dismissed as a dogmatic ideologue or as a mere private of the First World War with no understanding of strategy. This book is a must-read for everybody interested in the Second World War and the general military-political relationships in war.



**Kim Ghattas,** *Black Wave: Saudi Arabia, Iran and the Rivalry that Unravalled the Middle East*

There are a few pivotal dates to understand the Middle East, and for sure, 1979 tops the list of them all. That is the year revolution in Iran happened, the Grand Mosque of Mecca was taken over by an armed group lead by a preacher, and the USSR entered Afghanistan in support of its government. Legacy of these events still play out today, from strife in the Middle East to internationalism of jihadist networks. In this accessible and well written book, one of world's leading reporters on the Middle East, provides a superb background the Saudi Arabia and Iran rivalry that continue to shape the region and beyond.



## ABOUT THE CHACR

You can learn more about the CHACR at [www.chacr.org.uk](http://www.chacr.org.uk)

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