



CHACR TAKE AWAY NEWSLETTER

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INTRODUCTION

This is the weekly CHACR Take Away newsletter, 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 warfighting for the British Army personnel. **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.**

LATEST FROM CHACR

This week, we have released the latest CHACR Take Away video recording with a leading expert. This week's episode focuses on global jihad, and features a discussion with a leading expert on the topic. You can [watch it here](#).

We will soon be launching a Commentary section on our public website, www.chacr.org.uk. This page will feature short articles by our team and external experts on topics of relevance for the Army, both to 'inform' and to 'stimulate' discussions. Keep an eye on our website and follow us on Twitter. We will release three articles this month.

Our Senior Fellow Dr Ziya Meral just [released a paper on NATO and its Southern Flank](#) as part of a book on Future NATO. Do reach out to us if you want access a copy of the essay. [You can watch him and RUSI experts discuss Covid-19 and Middle East on a webinar](#) here.

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Before COVID struck us and the Integrated Review loomed large, against a background of straitened times financially, the Army was wrestling with some major force development issues. How does one compete in the 'constant competition' of global affairs, when others (like Russia for example) are competing using a very different set of rules from us? NATO remains the 'cornerstone of UK Defence Policy', yet how seriously are we committing, and will we commit in future, to NATO in our current and projected force postures and commitments? What is the balance in demand and tasking for 3 Div and 6 Div (and 1 Div come to that)? What does a 21st Century force look like (with a new emphasis on AI, machine-learning, dispersion, range, hypersonic capabilities, self-projection, unmanned warfare and cyber)? What does the language of 'Sunrise and Sunset capabilities' mean for the Army?

Regardless of Coronavirus, all of those questions and projections for force development remain relevant and important. COVID-19 has not made them any less apposite than they were before. But COVID-19 has also, starkly, reminded us that, regardless of the shortage of resources in the Treasury, and regardless of carefully crafted projections and policies, there are certain events that just occur, and keep occurring, in the most unpredictable of ways, at the most inconvenient of times, which, in an old-fashioned and off-message sort of way, simply demand large numbers of disciplined, available, flexible, wilco, hardworking and robust people. (And if those people are also first aid trained and in possession of plenty of logistic capability that isn't reliant upon just-in-time civilian structures so much the better.) Those across Whitehall who are engaged now in wrestling with COVID-19 would be well-advised to be writing heavy notes in the margins of their notebooks to remind themselves, once this is all over, that they had an Army to call upon that was able (at a pinch) to meet their needs.

Maj Gen (Ret) Dr Andrew Sharpe

LOGISTICS & DETERRENCE

In case of a crisis in the Baltics, one fundamental challenge will play the defining factor: capability to move large and heavy forces across Europe and into the theatre and provide reinforcements. In fact, that ability serves as the underwriter of all deterrence. [This thorough report](#) explores the complex legal, structural and operational issues that would emerge in reinforcing the Baltic region, which has wider applications for all areas of operation for NATO. As the report notes, unlike NATO, Russia enjoys significant advantages in the Baltic region, which might mislead to a risky calculation behind a military adventure and pose the fait accompli scenarios of seizing control of a territory.

A WHOLE NEW WORLD? MAYBE

There is a lot of speculation on what the future will be like after and if and how this pandemic ends. In many ways, it is clear that the economic cost of the lock down will impact every country affected and might trigger a global recession. [One report noted that a billion people](#) are facing drastic economic challenges from the virus. [This article by a renowned economist](#), however, challenges some of the extreme future forecasts and grounds them with a more realistic near future perspective: most of the social and political developments ahead are trends already unfolding and will only entrench some of them deeper rather than a substantial restructuring of societies and politics.

COVID-19 AND MILITARIES

All across the world, armed forces are being mobilised in response to the pandemic. While what they bring to the response is clear, as can be seen in the British example. The pandemic also poses operational and personnel management challenges – Turkey announced it was limiting its troop movements in Syria due to the pandemic to ensure they do not catch the virus, while the US Navy has had to deal with the challenges infected crew members on deployed ships brings, (e.g. the aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt) and the fall out of how this issue was handled. [This Reuters report](#) brings together snapshots on the topic from around the world.

COMBATting DISINFORMATION

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues, and infections rates surge in Europe and North America, several countries, including China, Russia and Iran, are waging information campaigns to ensure they are not blamed for the virus outbreak. Biological disinformation campaigns are nothing new however, and [this article looks to the Cold War](#) for suggestions on how these campaigns can be addressed.

[This article discusses](#) how social media platforms, messaging services and search engines have responded to pandemic misinformation, by taking swift action to curb false and potentially dangerous information about Covid-19. But, do these actions provide a model for combatting political disinformation?

BRINGING IN THE VOLUNTEERS

In 2019, the United States Marine Corps announced the creation of the Cyber Auxiliary, intended to help develop the USMC's cyber skillset. However, the challenge remains to find individuals who have the required skillset and can integrate into the USMC's culture. [This article looks at the example of the women's Auxiliary in World War II](#) for pertinent examples of incorporating non-traditional volunteers to help meet changing organisational goals. It also looks at the success of the US Coast Guard Auxiliary University Program in recruiting university students to enhance active duty capabilities.

CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking is crucial to sound decision-making, particularly in the uncertain environments in which modern armies are required to operate. Yet, traditional military hierarchies and training tend to reinforce and reward cognitive conformity rather than diversity. Drawing on the experience on operation augury, the Australian Army's training mission in the Philippines, [this article looks at how army hierarchies can promote critical thinking](#) and thought diversity to enhance the performance of combat brigades.

DEBATING CLAUSEWITZ

Clausewitz's theory of war remains as current today as it was in the 19th century. And yet, in recent years, academics and military thinkers have challenged this view and have argued that Clausewitz's understanding of 19th century war and warfare is no longer applicable in the world of the 21st century. To a large degree, this perception has been based on selective reading and, as the followers of Clausewitz would argue, wrong interpretations of the "the dead Prussian". This is a very scholarly debate and it is not easy to follow without a good understanding of the *Politik* (as Clausewitz called it), military history, and indeed a level of the German language. [In his article, George Dimitriu sums up the different views](#) in an accessible way, which makes it easy to understand the different views and their interpretations of Clausewitz.

WARGAMING THE FUTURE

Wargaming is a well established tool in the British Army. Exercises such as the Camberley Kriegsspiel have provided useful insights for the Army across the entire spectrum of war and conflict. What solutions do traditional war games offer in the new realm of cyber and how -if at all- do war games have to evolve in order to offer useful insights in this domain? The NATO research group "Gamification of Cyber Defence/Resilience" ran an international Workshop on "Multi-Domain Future Cyber Wargaming" that sheds some light on these issues. [Learn more about it here.](#)

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

The [Battle of Appomattox Court House](#), fought in Appomattox County, Virginia, on the morning of April 9, 1865, was one of the last battles of the American Civil War (1861–1865). It was the final engagement of Confederate General Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia before it surrendered to the Union Army of the Potomac under General Ulysses S. Grant. This event triggered a series of subsequent surrenders across the South by June, signalling the end of the four-year-long war and the defeat of the Confederates.



Federal soldiers at Appomattox Court House.
[Image Source](#)

THINGS TO KEEP ON YOUR RADAR SCREENS

- **Global Warming**

In case you thought 2020 is going pretty well, [the first three months of the year recorded](#) some of the hottest months in 140 years of records.

- **AI and Unmanned Vessels**

One more step closer to fully autonomous commercial and military ships, [as AI is being applied to control of ships.](#)

- **Russo-Turkish Competition**

A good [background to Turkish-Russian relations](#), and how simple readings of their rapprochement as a new alliance is rather problematic.

- **Is Europe losing Italy?**

There have been [worrying reports of even some of the most pro European voices in Italy raising questions](#), while Russia stepped in with PR campaigns.

- **Urban Warfare**

John Spencer is a friend of CHACR, and [his recent piece on urban warfare](#) he captures why it is a real hard challenge.

- **ISIS in Maldives?**

[Recent attacks in Maldives by jihadis](#) are raising some serious concerns on the future.

WHAT CHACR TEAM IS READING

Alexander Cooley and Daniel Nexon, *Exit from Hegemony; The unravelling of the American Global Order*

One of the most important conversations on the current state of global affairs, is the direction of USA and how other powers are seeking to exploit the opportunities this creates, and how both of these are shaping or undermining the liberal international order. This book is a fascinating approach to capture the rise and decline of hegemonic order. It surveys both how revisionist powers are seeking to maximise regional opportunities, and how weaker states are exploring new patron-client relationships away from the demands of liberal economic and political conditions. These coupled with the Trump's 'America First' vision only accelerates the developments, and continues to lessen America's position as a world power.

Oscar Jonsson, *The Russian Understanding of War: Blurring the Lines Between War and Peace.*

Recent Russian belligerence, in the form of territorial annexation, information warfare and subversive activities, is a source of concern for the West. In *The Russian Understanding of War*, Jonsson analyses the development of Russian military thought, from the Bolshevik Revolution to the present day. Jonsson draws upon Russian primary sources, including military doctrines and writings of Russian political leadership and military theorists to demonstrate the centrality of information warfare and subversion in the Russian concept of modern war. Jonsson argues that the Russian notion of the nature of war has changed to incorporate activities below the threshold of armed violence, a position that will surely spark debate amongst students of Clausewitz! This book provides a valuable insight into Russian perceptions of its interventions in Ukraine and Crimea, and how the West can curb Russian aggression without escalation into conflict.

Michael Shaara, *The Killer Angels*

The Killer Angels is a historical novel by Michael Shaara that was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1975. The book tells the story of the three days of the Battle of Gettysburg in the American Civil War, and the day leading up to it: June 30, 1863, as the troops of both the Union and the Confederacy move into battle around the town of Gettysburg, and July 1, July 2, and July 3, when the battle was fought. The story is character-driven and told from the perspective of various protagonists, mainly James Longstreet and Robert Lee with the Confederates, and John Buford and Joshua L. Chamberlain with the Union.

ANALYSIS RESOURCE

[A good resource by Mercy Corps, updated weekly.](#)

COVID-19 SECONDARY IMPACT ANALYSIS

March 31 2020

Acute conflicts and humanitarian crises are often the result of the complex interactions of many factors. The majority of these factors will be altered, and likely amplified, by the spread of COVID-19.

Mercy Corps has an internal analytical capacity used to support our access and programming in complex and high risk environments. For the foreseeable future this capacity will support our COVID-19 response.

This product will provide field-driven analysis to identify emerging trends relevant to operational decision-making. It will be updated on a weekly basis.



ABOUT THE CHACR

You can learn more about the CHACR at www.chacr.org.uk

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