



CHACR TAKE AWAY NEWSLETTER ISSUE 6

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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 the latest products by the 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 THE CHACR

While we continue our long term book projects and support specific Army tasks, we are also increasing our regular public outputs to provide you with analysis and insight on issues of relevance for the Army. You can watch the latest **CHACR Take Away** [video here](#). It features Soner Cagaptay, a Washington DC based author and analyst, discussing Turkey, its foreign policy, relations with Russia, NATO and US and presence in the Middle East and East Med. We will release a new one this week, an interview with a former CIA and US Army officer, looking at the evolving relationships between intelligence, military operations, and the future of intelligence in a changing strategic space. Click on the picture on the right for the first of our **CHACR Lectures on the Go** series of in depth talks by experts. This one is on External Powers in the Western Balkans. Our **CHACR Commentary** initiative continues to build up a good backlog of short articles on our website, www.chacr.org.uk, to both 'stimulate' thinking and 'inform' decision making and analysis.

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

As Lockdown continues, albeit with some positive signs of alleviation, the CHACR continues to look back at history for useful lessons (a paper for DStrat on the lessons from the Spanish Flu epidemic of a hundred years ago will shortly be converted for wider distribution into a special Ares and Athena) and forwards for food-for-thought for the Army's future development in the world after COVID-19. One of the big lessons that we were able to offer on the Spanish Flu (and it may seem to be a banal glimpse of the obvious, but it was worth stating nevertheless) was that despite a casualty rate of military and civilians that exceeded anything that World War One had delivered, let alone anything that COVID has even threatened, it seems to have been treated as a complete side-issue from 1918 to 1920. In 2020 COVID has brought the world to a locked-down standstill. This has been a stark reminder that context, circumstance and perspectives are as important as the events themselves. And because perspectives and contexts matter, it is important to remember that Coronavirus is not the only thing happening in the world - and for that reason we have also sought to provide a steady stream of reminders that the ebb and flow of politics, diplomacy, conflict, tension, economic shifts, power balances and human interactions of every stripe are carrying on regardless. While our national Main Effort rightly remains the defeat of this disease, the wider thinkers and watchers need to keep thinking and watching too.

Maj Gen (Ret) Dr Andrew Sharpe

WATCH THE FIRST LECTURE



FUTURE OF CITIES

The pandemic has disrupted a lot of assumed trajectories in social, political and economic forecasts. One interesting line of reflection is on the future of cities after the pandemic, and whether urbanisation as we assumed to be the fixed trajectory of all will alter itself. [This article by Prof Mark Kelinman raises some important questions](#) on how strengths of cities are now turning into weaknesses. He argues that the great cities maintain their allure, looking back at the Great Plague of 1665 and the Great Fire, but that cities are likely to be different places than before.

US MILITARY AND PANDEMIC

[In this thought provoking article](#), Barno and Bensahel argue that “the global pandemic is about to profoundly change the US military’s role in defending the United States– even if Pentagon leaders do not know it yet.” The authors argue that the DoD’s focus on external threats in far away lands will be less important as the threats inside the homeland will require more from it. They argue that the threats from five warfighting domains (sea, land, air, cyber and space) will become much lower security threat priorities in face of newly emerging and unconventional threats at home. Article asserts too much, and too boldly in forecasts of the future, a common weakness in op-ed circus, but worth to read to reflect for the UK context.

WARRIOR ETHOS: TOXIC?

Our troublemaking (in a good way) friends at the Wavell Room has posted a very stimulating piece, [“On the Toxicity of the ‘Warrior’ Ethos”](#). It has triggered some good discussions on social media and makes an important warning on how unhelpful some views on warfighting can be as we seek to raise professional armed forces.

IS NEW BETTER ALWAYS?

Is newer always better? Does technological sophistication always offer advantage? [This short article suggests it is not always the case](#). Drawing on relatively recent combat examples from Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan, this article argues that we should approach novel technologies with a critical eye, imagining how they could be thwarted by lower-tech countermeasures. Rather than chasing the next generation technology for future combat systems, we should question our cultural bias towards novelty, and also consider enduring capability, survivability and adaptability in our equipment and that of our potential adversaries.

AIRPOWER AND URBAN WARS

Discussions on the future of urban warfare has largely been led by land forces, both in the US and in the UK. It is widely accepted that the modern urban environment, presents a considerable challenge to land forces, whether they are undertaking combat operations or humanitarian missions. However, the role of air forces in future urban operations has been paid relatively little attention. [As this article points out](#), urban warfare was central to early airpower theory that featured in discussions of how air forces might be used in the fledgling days of aviation. The morale-destroying potential of airpower was largely disproved in World War II, as air power was used to decimate urban centres in World War II. The Blitz and the firebombing of cities in Germany and Japan failed to destroy the will to fight but brought greater consciousness of the devastating collateral damage of aerial bombardment. The development of precision weapons has increased our ability minimise civilian casualties, but the discussion of the role of the air force in urban operations has remained largely static. The article offers nine key considerations for the US Air Force in the future of urban conflict, that have relevance to the RAF as well.

GEOGRAPHY MATTERS

The ability to “think in space” is a crucial tool for decision-makers, but one that is often de-emphasized. Spatial thinking is more than map reading, it is the ability to conceptualise the international system and how geography influences regional and international power dynamics. [This article discusses](#) various map projections and how they influenced our understanding of relative scale, size and consequently importance, of different parts of the world, and the changing nature of threats throughout the past two centuries. Modern geographic information systems technology provides us with more accurate depictions of the globe than ever before, but we rarely make effective use of these tools. Reading a map from our adversaries’ perspective, trying to step into their metaphorical geographic shoes, helps us to develop a better understanding of perceptions, priorities, proximities and cartographic distortions that affect our adversaries’ worldview. The article suggests that spatial thinking and communication could be incorporated into staff college programmes and civilian foreign policy schools, so that leaders understand geography, not simply read maps.

WHAT USE IS HISTORY?

What is the use of military history to the professional soldiers? Is it to provide tactical and operational lessons to prepare an army for the next war or is it to provide more enduring insights into the nature of war? The late Professor Sir Michael Howard gave a very clear answer to this: In a lecture delivered in 1961 the he argued that the aim is not to make men clever for next time; it is to make them wise forever. To prove his point, Howard assessed the uses and abuses of the study of military history from the perspectives of both the academic historian and the practising soldier. While acknowledging past tendencies to mythologise national achievements out of often misguided notions of patriotism, as well as difficulties involving evidence, he argued that the benefits to soldier and civilian alike of 'finding out what really happened' outweigh these doubts. Using the criteria of width, depth and context, he concluded that the study of military history enables an understanding of the nature of war and its impact on society and directly improves the soldier's ability to understand and fulfil his function. Howard's concept and his trinity have become accepted wisdom for military historians and this text, based on the lecture he delivered in 1961, should be the starting point for everybody dealing with military history - be it for professional purposes or even for a general interest in the subject.

THE SLEEPWALKERS:

The commemorations of the First World War centenary are behind us, but the war is still relevant today. The complexities of the political and military realities that led to the outbreak of the war can be a stark reminder for strategic thinkers today. Christopher Clark's book *The Sleepwalkers* addressed these realities and led to a complete re-evaluation of the events in 1914 and, in particular, the question of the nations' "war guilt". In this video lecture, [Clark summarises his findings and provides thought-provoking ideas that are as relevant in 2020 as they were in 1914.](#)

THINGS TO KEEP ON YOUR RADAR SCREENS

- **FRONTEX REPORT**

Frontex released its [2020 Risk Analysis Report](#), which has good info on trends on European borders.

- **Putin's Assad Headache**

Putin is not about with things in Syria, and the Kremlin is blaming Assad, [according to this report.](#)

- **China's Pressure on AU**

China's Ambassador to Australia [threatens with trade to stop coronavirus investigation.](#)

- **Haftar Declaration**

Haftar took the unilateral decision to [declare unity government and that he has a mandate to govern all of the country.](#)

- **China—Japan Trade**

[Chinese fears over Japan-led manufacturing exodus from China.](#)

- **China Propaganda in the EU**

China's [push for EU propaganda battle over the virus](#) is causing tensions.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Following on from the theme in last week's newsletter, this week saw the end of the fight for Berlin in 1945. As the enemy was closing in on the centre of Berlin, Hitler and his newly-wed wife Eva Braun committed suicide in the Führerbunker on 30 April. On 1 May, Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels and his wife followed Hitler's example and killed themselves, but only after having poisoned their own six children. On 2 May, the commander of the German forces in Berlin, General Weidling, surrendered Berlin to the Soviet forces. This futile battle, conducted at a time when the majority of the German territory had already been occupied by the Allies, cost both the Soviets and the Germans dearly. The casualty figures on both sides are debated: In the German case, it is estimated that 90 -100,000 soldiers died in the operation, in addition to a large number of civilians. It has been claimed that up to 125,000 German civilians were killed in and around Berlin in these final days of the Third Reich. On the Soviet side, research suggests that approximately 80,000 soldiers died in addition to up to 280,000 wounded. Nearly 2,000 Soviet tanks and APVs were destroyed during the battle. The conduct of the battle and the horrendous casualties make this battle one that is still worth studying as it sheds light on urban operations in all their complexities in a total, peer-on-peer war. It is also a stark reminder of the necessity to place military operations in the wider context - the German defence of Berlin could not change the outcome of the war. It was futile and so was the horrendous loss of life on both sides.

CHACR TEAM RECOMMENDS

A Woman in Berlin

Fighting a battle and defeating the enemy is only the first step towards victory. What is the aftermath of the fighting, how do you organise a return to normal life in a city and how does the civilian population adjust to new life under the victor's eyes? These are questions that need to be addressed by any army. For this, it is useful to analyse the experiences of the civilian population as it adjusts to the new reality. *A Woman in Berlin* is an anonymous memoir by a German woman covering the weeks from 20 April to 22 June 1945, during the fall of Berlin and its occupation by the Red Army. The writer describes the struggle to survive in a destroyed and occupied Berlin, the widespread rapes by the Soviet soldiers, including her own, and the women's pragmatic approach to survival, often taking Soviet officers for protection. In 2003 a new edition of the book was published in Germany, again anonymously. It met with wide critical acclaim and was on best-seller lists for more than 19 weeks.

Jonathan Trevor, *Align*

No stranger to the Army Generalship Programme, Prof Jonathan Trevor of Oxford University's Saïd Business School explores why businesses succeed and fail. His argument centres upon 'strategic alignment', which military readers would recognise as being the alignment of 'Ends, Ways and Means'. This is a profoundly thought-provoking, well-founded and well-written book that has as much relevance in the running of governments or Defence as it does businesses. We most strongly recommend it, particularly as the Integrated Review looms over the Army.

Peter Diamandis and Steven Kotler. *The Future is Faster than You Think*.

Technological development is accelerating at an unprecedented rate, providing us with new capabilities and conveniences that impact our daily lives, habits, and the way our whole society operates. *The Future is Faster than You Think* investigates the science of technological convergence, explaining how, why and when disparate technologies evolve and merge, and the known outcomes of recent technological convergence. The book postulates on the potential effects of combining novel technologies including AI, robotics, and virtual reality, blockchain finance and 3D printing; how the fusion of these various technologies might change transportation, communication, food, medicine, entertainment, education, and finance. Written in a fast-paced style, *The Future is Faster Than You Think* strikes an overall optimistic tone regarding the development and integration of new technologies, with less attention paid to the possible implications and unintended consequences of rapid technological innovation. The book provides a lively, accessible introduction to the myriad technologies that could radically change multiple aspects of our daily lives not in the distant future, but in the next ten years.

DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION

The theory of disruptive innovation was developed by the academic and management consultant Clayton Christensen. He developed the theory to explain how small, agile organization can upset larger, well-established competitors, forcing them out of the market. Though initially developed for the business world, [this article suggests that the theory of disruptive innovation could be adapted and applied to military competition](#). The author draws on the historical example of the World War One U-boat race, to show how the disruptive technology of early U-boats that upset Britain's naval advantage, and illustrates how the disruptive innovations of Hamas and Hezbollah's parallel rocket strategies has forced Israel to pull back from disputed territory and invest heavily in expensive, highly sophisticated technological solutions.

ABOUT THE CHACR

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

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