



CHACR TAKE AWAY NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 11, JUNE 1 - JUNE 5, 2020

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 from the CHACR, and 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 the CHACR to enhance the conceptual component of warfighting for 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

The CHACR continues to provide close support to the Army on a broad range of projects and ongoing analysis, but also release products to help you to deepen your understanding of the complexities of today's and tomorrow's operating theatres. This week, we will release a new **CHACR Take Away** video focusing on Mali, featuring a discussion with a leading academic expert on the country; Dr Susanna Wing (author of multiple books on the country), who is currently writing an **In Depth Briefing** for us, which we will also release shortly. We will also release a new **In Depth Briefing** on Russia's use of religion in foreign policy and engagement, so keep checking our website and social media account.

We are also thrilled to launch a new initiative: **CHACR Webinars**, restricted conversations to Army and HMG personnel with leading experts and officials. The first one will be on 19 June, with Angus Lapsley, DG Strategy and International MoD, on The World after COVID-19. Spaces limited! So do register with your details for info on how to join the webinar.

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

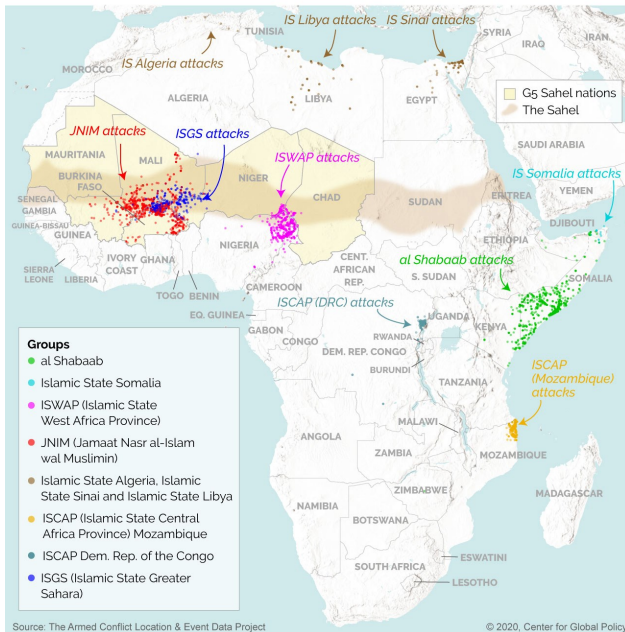
As we review the post-COVID-19 scenarios that are ahead of us, two very contrasting world-views are emerging. The first view is a sometimes impatient, sometimes positivist mindset that hankers for a 'return to normality' as rapidly as possible. This ranges from a simple desire to get back to meeting with friends in the pub, to a determination to restore normal human relations and to regenerate working conditions to re-start faltering economies, be they household, company, national or global. The second is a sometimes patient, sometimes cautious, sometimes thought-provoking, and sometimes alarming combination of perspectives that suggest that contingency planning for a whole range of options is as important an activity, right now, as planning and executing whatever actions the immediate demands of COVID place upon us. One single example struck me today, in conversation with an internationally very well-respected strategic economic analyst. She observed: "what if, when we can all return to work in Phase 3, a large proportion of those currently being paid by furlough rules find that they are laid off by failing, streamlined or changed companies? That alone has a raft of implications. But what if, three months later, there is a second coronavirus wave because, like the Spanish Flu 100 years ago, people think that 'it's all over' and behave in a way that ensures that it all comes rolling back again? What then happens to that large number of people who no longer have jobs from which they can be furloughed? What happens to their income, to their pride and to their engagement with society? I hope someone is thinking that one through....". She's right to ask those questions. We should all be looking forward to a return to less constrained and 'more normal' lives, but we should be contingency-planning at every level, from household, to organisational, to national, to international, to make sure that we are not caught out twice. (I've found myself rather too often recently quoting Hegel's observation that the only thing that we learn from history is that we don't learn from history....)

Maj Gen (Ret) Dr Andrew Sharpe

ISIS IN SAHEL

Another great study by the Center for Global Policy in their ISIS 2020 series. Click on the map below for a detailed study on ISIS activities in SAHEL.

Islamic State Provinces and Rival al Qaeda Affiliates' Areas of Operations in Africa, March 2017 to May 2020



CHINA-INDIA

We are witnessing the most serious standoff between India and China in years in the disputed border areas between the two countries. Chinese military build up and incursions into the territories has escalated. [See this briefing by the Economist.](#) You can sign up and read this article for free.

PROCUREMENT

In recent years, the German Bundeswehr has come under international criticism, in particular with the regards to the agreed 2% funding threshold and the lack of materiel available. One of the internal issues for the Bundeswehr is the prolonged procurement process, which makes it difficult to receive materiel quickly and in necessary numbers. In order to address this the “Law on Accelerated Procurement in the Defence and Security Sector and Optimisation of Award Statistics” has been passed which will streamline the procurement process. [Read more on the new German model here.](#)

DEFENCE INNOVATION

Militaries are typically conservative organisations, slow to change and often wedded to traditions. However, both technological developments, and ideas and threat perceptions of the day lead to reform and reorganisation of institutions. [This article, written by a former Assistant Secretary of the US Army,](#) recalls the arguments and decisions made for defence innovation during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, and reflects on how many of the lessons learned in those days remain relevant to today’s conversation about defence innovation.

US-CHINA COMPETITION

Over the past six years, great power competition became the conceptual framework upon which current US security and defence strategies are predicated, a marked shift away from the counterinsurgency/counter-terrorism focus on the post 9/11 era. However, present notions of American power tend to narrowly focus on military might and hard power projection: numbers of troops, weapons systems, tanks, ships, aircraft – the more sophisticated, the better. Indeed, the 2017 National Security Strategy enshrines technological overmatch as the purported salvation and security of American power. However, as [this article explains,](#) the narrow focus on military might means America lags behind China in other areas of power and influence: trade relationships, shipping, and investment, civilian technologies – the very tools that launched American power and influence over a century ago.

DRONE SWARMS

Drones offer numerous advantages to military forces, yet the ethics surrounding their use are still contested. At the 2017 annual meeting of the UN Convention on Conventional Weapons, an influential film was shown, depicting swarms of armed and autonomous drones, nicknamed ‘Slaughterbots,’ capable of identifying and killing a target. These drones were fictitious, yet the prospect of hunter killer drones was a chilling one, prompting concerns of the future development trajectory of this technology. However, fear of the lethal potential of drones did not prompt the cancellation of drone projects, and numerous armed forces have continued to invest in research and development of drone capabilities, whilst concurrently investing in autonomous weapons systems. [This article argues that we should resist](#) combining the two concurrent technological developments, describing in detail how and why armed fully autonomous drone swarms should be classified as weapons of mass destruction.

BATTLEFIELD STUDIES

Battlefield studies remain popular within the Army (despite the current stop due to COVID-19) and the Army has come a long way from the “battlefield tours” of old to the far more energetic and enlightening concept of the battlefield study as we see it today. Naturally, the British Army is not the only army to conduct these studies – in fact, the general concept was developed by the Prussian Army in the 19th century. The US military also conducts many battlefield studies and the US Army Center for Military History published instructions on the successful planning and conduct of these studies. [The document was written in 1987, but it remains relevant to day.](#) The instructions provide a concise overview and are valuable for everybody who is organising, and, indeed, attending, a battlefield study.

BATTLE OF PROKHOROVKA

Ben Wheatley follows on from his earlier work on the Battle of Prokhorovka with [this in depth article which looks to answer the question](#): If large numbers of German Armoured Fighting Vehicles (AFV) did not meet disaster on the ‘tank fields’ southwest of Prokhorovka (as was claimed for many decades by both Soviet and Western historiography), then when exactly did those participating German AFV of the Leibstandarte and Das Reich finally succumb to the Red Army?, How long did they survive on the Eastern Front against an ever more sophisticated and skilled opponent?’ Ben’s work, using original sources seeks to increase understanding of this often-mythologised battle.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

The Six-Day War was fought between 5 and 10 June 1967 by Israel and the neighbouring states of Egypt (known at the time as the United Arab Republic), Jordan, and Syria. In the months prior to June 1967, tensions between Israel and the neighbouring Arab states became dangerously heightened. On 5 June, Israel launched a series of pre-emptive airstrikes against Egyptian airfields, asserting imminent attack from the Egyptians. The question of which side caused the war is one of a number of controversies relating to the conflict. The Egyptians were caught by surprise, and nearly the entire Egyptian air force was destroyed with few Israeli losses, giving the Israelis air supremacy. Simultaneously, the Israelis launched a ground offensive into the Gaza Strip and the Sinai, which again caught the Egyptians by surprise. After some initial resistance, Nasser ordered the evacuation of the Sinai. Israeli forces rushed westward in pursuit of the Egyptians, inflicted heavy losses, and conquered the Sinai. The Israelis also fought the Syrians at the Golan Heights and the Jordanians in the West Bank. The successful Israeli operations in the West Bank led to the capture of all of Jerusalem. Egypt and Jordan agreed to a ceasefire on 8 June, and Syria agreed on 9 June; a ceasefire was signed with Israel on 11 June. Israel had crippled the Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian militaries, having killed over 20,000 troops while losing fewer than 1,000 of its own. Israel seized the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, from Jordan and the Golan Heights from Syria. About one million Arabs were placed under Israel's direct control in the newly captured territories. Israel's strategic depth grew to at least 300 kilometres in the south, 60 kilometres in the east, and 20 kilometres of extremely rugged terrain in the north, a security asset that would prove useful in the Yom Kippur War six years later.

THINGS TO KEEP ON YOUR RADAR SCREENS

- **US-China Interdependence**

An [interesting essay on the Chinese reassessment](#) of US-China economic interdependence and how it is changing.

- **Nile River**

As the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is near completion, [risks of escalation between Sudan, Ethiopia and Egypt are worrying.](#)

- **Oman and Foreign Consultants**

Some 70% of [contracts with foreign experts and consultants](#) won't be renewed.

- **Getting Defence Thinking**

[Australian DoD released a very good strategy document](#) on how advance thinking and learning in Australian forces .

- **Egypt-Turkey**

Egypt [announced a new international alliance to curb Turkish activities](#) in Libya and the wider Med.

- **Logistics**

A [blog post analyzing the challenges posed](#) by Over the Shore Logistics drawing observations and lessons from both world wars.

CHACR TEAM RECOMMENDS

Kenneth M. Pollack, *Armies of Sand*.

In this book Pollack, an expert on Middle Eastern military and political affairs, analyses why Arab armies have, as Pollack says, “consistently punched below their weight”. He argues convincingly that the efforts to uncover causes of military success and failure must begin far from the battlefield. So, he shines new light on social, economic, political, and cultural impediments to improving military effectiveness in Arab states. His core argument is that the influence of culture is the deciding factor in what makes armies “good”. This is a book that should be read by everybody with an interest in the Middle East, but also by those who want to understand the wider and more general influence of culture on military forces.

Toshi Yoshihahra & James Holmes. *Red Star over the Pacific*

In recent years, there has been renewed mention of great power competition, particularly between the United States and China. Indeed, the United States has already seriously considered possible Chinese threats to its naval base in Guam, Chinese militarisation of the South China Sea, and American support for Taiwan. *Red Star over the Pacific* addresses the ascendancy of Chinese naval power, and its possible influence on American maritime strategy towards the South China Sea in particular and Asia in general. The book looks back to the great naval theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan, whose writings on sea-power have found renewed popularity in China, and makes the case that China has prepared itself to present a credible challenge to American military power in the Pacific. Drawing on Chinese sources, the book discusses China’s perceptions of the Pacific and sea power, and investigates the Chinese navy’s concepts, tactics, and capabilities, including their relatively new nuclear submarine fleet. The book compares China’s present day geostrategic position to that of Imperial Germany over a century ago, arguing that China poses a very serious threat to American strategic interests in the Pacific.

Aimée Fox, *Learning to Fight: Military Innovation and Change in the British Army, 1914-1918*.

Many of you who have passed through Shrivenham will be familiar with Dr Fox’s work. This book is based on her Doctoral research and takes a forensic look at the practice of learning and how it was applied across the British and Imperial forces during the First World War. She outlines the importance and character of the networks that enabled – but sometimes inhibited – innovation. Social, Regimental and Professional connections were all utilised as ideas were passed back and forth between units, between different theatres, between civilian professional and academic experience, and between different Armies. What becomes clear is a febrile environment in which the British Army adapted from a small Imperial Force, structured to protect the Empire, to one that grew ten times in size, incorporating airpower, armoured vehicles and a fully integrated military-industrial base. At the heart of this effort was the Army’s self-awareness to pass military officers through Academic programmes such as the LSE from as early as 1907, and incorporate relevant civilian expertise during the War, such as the railway magnate, Sir Eric Geddes. Anyone with even a passing interest in the British Army’s ability to learn must read this book; it is outstanding.

HISTORY FROM HOME

[Dan Hill](#)’s History from Home is a series of free webinars delivered by various SMEs on a wide range of historical topics; from Peter Johnston (NAM) talking about the Falklands War, to James Holland talking about Normandy ’44 and a lot more too. Dan has made the [archive](#) of this series freely accessible to all and it is well worth a look. [Don’t forget to look at the list of upcoming talks](#)

ABOUT THE CHACR

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

This document can not be republished, cited in part or full, distributed or posted in any forum or media without permission from the CHACR.

CHACR is an independent think-tank established by the British Army. The views expressed in the content of this newsletter and studies and reports it signposts are those of individual authors and in no way represent the official views of the British Army, Ministry of Defence or any components thereof. They are shared to stimulate thinking and discussion, and exposure to different views.