



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 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 the CHACR to enhance the conceptual component of warfighting 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.**

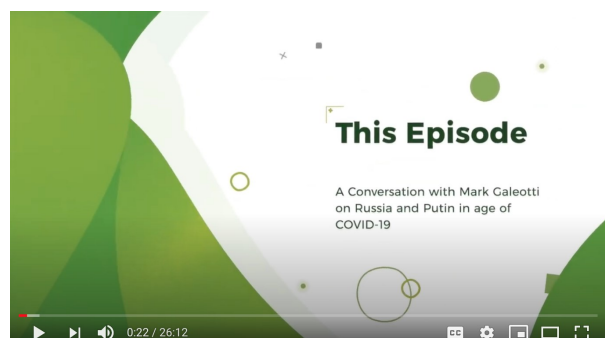
LATEST FROM THE CHACR

The CHACR continues to provide close support to the Army on a broad range of projects and ongoing analysis, but we also release products to help to deepen your understanding of the complexities of current and future operating theatres. We have released [a new CHACR Take Away Interview on Mali](#) and [a briefing paper to accompany it](#), both by Susanna Wing (a leading expert on Mali). This is the first product line from us to support our personnel heading out there soon. We also just released a brilliant CHACR **Take Away Interview** focusing on Putin and Russia in the age of COVID-19, featuring leading Russia expert Mark Galeotti. Click on the image on right to watch it on a non MoDNet computer. Our Russia focus continued with a [new briefing on how Russia uses religion as a softpower tool](#). Some 200 people already registered to the first **CHACR Webinar**, which will be on 19 June, with Angus Lapsley, DG Strategy and International MoD, on World after COVID-19. We have increased our Webinar attendee capacity up to 500, so there is now space for more Army and HMG personnel to join in! Do reach out to CHACR for registration.

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

We have been doing some work over the last couple of weeks on social cohesion. What we have so far unearthed has suggested to us that this is a topic that we may wish to investigate in rather more detail. It may seem like a statement of the blindingly obvious to a military readership, but when the going gets tough not only do the tough need to get going, but everyone else also needs to work together and look out for each other ever more closely. Teamwork, whether on a small scale or a grand scale, tends to make dealing with adversity rather easier than it may otherwise be. Of course, in every successful team there is always a role for constructive debate and questioning. Good ideas, after all, do not have a rank. But once the discussion is over, decisions are made and direction is issued the line between constructive criticism and unhelpful critique moves. It becomes hard to spot, in a vibrant society, where healthy debate slips into dissent, division, cynicism and even deliberate disobedience. A glance at history has shown us that many of those societies that, once successful, begin to enter unhealthy decline tend also (and this is, admittedly, a sweeping generalisation) to have switched their national or social outlooks from one of positive national self-confidence to one of cynical national self-doubt and a tendency to turn in on themselves. Just a simple glance at the Thesaurus suggests that cohesion (unity, consistency, interrelation, structure) is more helpful in difficult times than its antonym incoherence (unintelligibility, disjointedness, confusion, disorganisation). As I say, all statements of the obvious, perhaps, but as we watch events unfold, nationally and internationally, digging rather deeper into this subject may offer some very useful insights.

Maj Gen (Ret) Dr Andrew Sharpe



MALI

As part of our mission to support operational needs, our Global Analysis Programme (GAP) began focusing Mali and the larger SAHEL region. Our latest briefing (Click on the pic on the right) provides an accessible and clear overview of the current worrying picture in Mali and provides a background to the complex conflicts in the country. Dr Wing makes the worrying observation that more civilians died in the country in 2019 than in any year since 2012, while the UN has named its mission in the country as the most dangerous one for peacekeeping personnel. She points out that military force alone cannot succeed without coordinated development and governance support that gets to the heart of ongoing crises in the country. You can also [watch an interview video we did with her here](#). The CHACR will also organise a SAHEL webinar in June or early July.



EAST AFRICAN JIHADISM

2020 has been a demanding year with so many overwhelming news items. Amidst all the major headlines, the Al Shabaab attack on a US military installation in Kenya in January that lasted for hours and killed American personnel went unnoticed. The attack was unprecedented as it breached a US military base, and demonstrated worrying analyses that has suggested that Al Shabaab was improving its capabilities. [This brief analysis](#) offers a good background to jihadism in Horn of Africa, and explains why and how Al Shabaab emerged, survived and adapted and proved itself to be resilient. It makes the observation that the new generation of Salafi jihadists are larger in number and more diverse in backgrounds and skills than previous ones.

COVID-19 AND INDO-PACIFIC

A major impact of the COVID-19 on the geostrategic issues is how it is accelerating the trends already in place in the Indo-Pacific region. [In this helpful article, Lynn Kuok](#) provides a breakdown of key trends that are being accelerated as a fall out of the pandemic: trend one is US-China rivalry, trend two is weaker countries relying more on China, trend three is a further shift in the balance of power towards China (more influence in the ASEAN, and less US leadership and influence in the region), fourth trend is greater role for middle powers to maintain the balance of power (such as Japan taking more proactive stands). An analysis well worth reading and reflecting on a region where UK has relatively less engagement but sees increased importance in.

THINGS TO KEEP ON YOUR RADAR SCREENS

• **Peacekeeping**

A [thought provoking article on why the UK should](#) continue support to UN peacekeeping but also push for reform.

• **US Troop Cuts in Germany**

A worrying argument on German and European [political implications of reports on US troop cuts](#)

• **Egypt-Haftar-Libya**

A [unique report on the Egypt-Libya portfolio](#), and what is next now that Haftar has lost the momentum,

• **UK Intelligence**

A [fascinating interview with former head of MI6](#) on whether the UK is still a global intelligence power. It is on You Tube and so must be viewed from a non MDONet computer.

• **China in the Middle East**

An [interesting take](#) on how China is positioned to exploit its relationships in the Middle East.

• **France—Libya**

Paris [faces being frozen out of Libya](#) as its backed strong-man-to-be is in retreat.

CYBER ATTACKS

The question of how to respond to cyber-attacks remains as complex as ever. [In this article for the US Army's Mad Scientist Laboratory](#), Marie Murphy, explores what kinetic responses to cyber-attacks might be and notes: "Cyber-attacks are quickly manifesting as a ubiquitous feature of modern warfare. However, the consequences of launching a cyber-attack are becoming more unpredictable and dependent on the individual case. Due to the rapid progression of cyber capabilities worldwide; codified laws, ethics, and norms have not yet caught up for every situation. Clarified by recent events between the Israelis and the Palestinians, the threshold for using kinetic weapons against a cyber-threat or in response to a cyber-attack appears to be when, not if, it is appropriate to cross domains. The U.S. Army needs leaders who are capable of operating in ill-defined spaces which necessitate a decision between engaging in physical violence in response to a cyber-attack and retaliating in the same domain."

AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS & AI

The risk of escalation caused by autonomous weapons is an ongoing debate. [Paul Scharre's PhD Thesis 'Autonomous Weapons and Stability'](#) considers how Autonomous Weapons could impact on Crisis Stability, escalation and ending conflicts. Worryingly, "The thesis concludes that normal accident theory best describes the situation of fully autonomous weapons and that militaries are highly unlikely to be able to achieve high-reliability operations with fully autonomous weapons. Unanticipated lethal actions are likely to be normal consequences of using fully autonomous weapons and militaries can reduce but not entirely eliminate these risks." Another angle on similar questions is the promise and risks of Artificial Intelligence. Drawing on history, [this article traces the origins of AI](#) in defence and highlights some of the risks that are likely to arise, and how they might be mitigated. Integrating AI into our systems to increase efficiency and reduce harm will require the concurrent development of uniquely human and social capabilities.

US MARINES AND WARGAMING

The US Marine Corps has taken some bold steps in adapting into current and future challenges. [Blogger 'Defence With a C' considers the insights](#) that the US Marine Corps developed from the wargames used to shape their 2030 force design. The USMC derived 7 key lessons, which were then used to aid the development of their future force concepts. This blog post is a helpful capturing of the key lessons and what it might mean for us.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

On 10 June 1940, as the French government fled to Bordeaux during the German invasion, declaring Paris an open city, Mussolini felt the conflict would soon end and declared war on Britain and France. As he said to the Army's Chief-of-Staff, Marshal Badoglio: 'I only need a few thousand dead so that I can sit at the peace conference as a man who has fought.' Mussolini had the immediate war aim of expanding the Italian colonies in North Africa by seizing land from the British and French colonies. This opened North Africa as a new theatre of war. After a long campaign, fought in North Africa, on Sicily and the Italian mainland, Italy surrendered to the Allies on 3 September 1943 and declared war on Germany on 13 October of this year.

STRATEGY AND HISTORY

Strategy has attracted much recent attention in UK public policy debates, principally because of its absence from the direction of current conflicts. Before 1945 strategic thought used history as its core discipline but since then history has either dropped out of the equation or been misapplied. There was admittedly an apparent contradiction in strategic theory's attention to the past; the principal policy function of strategy is predictive and its application in real time pragmatic. Here the challenges are to reconcile not just the perspectives of strategic theory and strategy in practice, but also the differences between civilians and the military. Finding satisfactory institutional frameworks for strategy-making is as important as thinking strategically. [In this YouTube video](#), Professor Sir Hew Strachan analyses the 'The Problem of Strategy' – a must-see video for everybody interested in the matter.

PME

We recently shared an article on the significant reforms in professional military education agreed to by the US Joint Chiefs of Staff. [This article recommends structural changes](#) to the way in which professional military education is delivered, including greater freedom in curriculum design and delivery, a focus of quality over accreditation, and increased diversity amongst instructors and institutional leadership. In contrast to the Joint Chiefs recommendations, which push for an augmented focus on military history, the authors of this article suggest there military history already dominates institutions and their curricula, and more focus on problem solving and creative thinking methods and modalities is required.

CHACR TEAM RECOMMENDS

Peter Caddick-Adams *Monte Cassino: Ten Armies in Hell*

The battle of Monte Cassino is one of the most famous ones of the Second World War, and the battlefield remains a popular destination for battlefield studies. Waged deep in the Italian mountains beneath a medieval monastery, it was an astonishingly brutal encounter, grinding up ten armies. Peter Caddick's *Monte Cassino: Ten Armies in Hell* provides a vivid account of how an array of men from across the globe fought the most lengthy and devastating engagement of the Italian campaign in an ancient monastery town. The book puts Cassino into the context of the Italian campaign and larger Allied war plans, and takes readers into the savage, often hand-to-hand combat in the bombed-out medieval town. Over four months, the struggle would inflict some 200,000 casualties, and Allied planes would level the historic monastery—and eventually the entire town as well.

M. Taylor Fravel. *Active Defence: China's Military Strategy since 1949*

The People's Republic of China has had nine different "strategic guidelines," what we would call military strategies, over the past seventy years. *Active Defence* explores China's previous and contemporary military goals, and its perceptions of military threats. It draws on Chinese language sources including the memoirs of military leaders, and previously classified primary source documents, to explain why certain courses of action were pursued, whilst others were not. Analysing the strategic changes of 1956, 1980 and 1993, the book shows how China has sought to adapt to significant shifts in the international system. These shifts occurred at times when the Chinese Communist party was unified, demonstrating the interaction between domestic politics and international events, and the consequent influence on military strategy. *Active Defence* provides insight into the evolution of Chinese military thinking over the past seven decades and offers new material for understanding the dynamics of military change, particularly within authoritarian states.

Malcolm Gladwell. *Talking to Strangers: What We Should Know About the People We Don't Know*

This book is a popular choice and clearly bought by many. It poses a key question: how do we know we can trust someone we do not know, or to that matter, know. It is full of anecdotes on snap judgements gone wrong by individuals and law enforcement officers. The reader might get confused on where the conversation is heading, and how do all anecdotes add up or whether the book answers the question it promises to answer. Nevertheless it is a light reading to get you think about situations that might escalate or end up wrongly due to false judgements.

BAR PICK



The British Army Review (BAR) is now publicly available and can easily be [accessed on the Army's public platform](#). CHACR takes pride in its support to the continual development of BAR. In our Newsletters, we will draw attention to interesting and noteworthy articles, and point to their page numbers, which you can read by clicking on the cover of the issue they

are in in this section. As we explore concept of 'winning' and 'victory' in today's conflicts and subthreshold contentions, Dr Major Kelly Burman has written an interesting [article for BAR issue 176](#), pages 16-22. The article introduces the concept of 'Ontological Security' as a frame of reference to move on from older frameworks and challenge our assumptions and bias.

ABOUT THE CHACR

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

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