



# CHACR TAKE AWAY NEWSLETTER

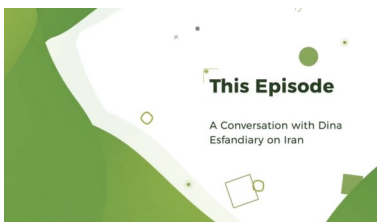
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## INTRODUCTION

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 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. **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 fulfil its mission with multiple activities and initiatives in support of the Army while in remote working conditions. Our latest **CHACR Take Away** video was just released. It featured Dina Esfandary for a discussion on Iran, its regional ambitions and how the US policy of maximum pressure failed. You can [watch the video here](#) though you need a non ModNet computer or phone to do so, but you can listen to its audio file as [a podcast here](#). This week we will release a new **CHACR Commentary** article, written by our own Dr Ziya Meral, reflecting on lessons learned from all of the activities of the Global Analysis Programme on how to bring external expertise into defence and which kinds of products work. Check out our website or follow us on Twitter @CHACR\_Camberley to keep up to date with our outputs.



## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

The morning routine of scanning the headlines to see what's going on in the world done, I turn to jot down a few thoughts for this week's newsletter. A casual glance at this morning's BBC news front page online, then a quick cast of the net a bit further afield to absorb a wider range of views from other news sources: the Guardian, The Times, The Telegraph, Sky and so on, then a quick flick into Europe and further afield from Le Figaro just across the Channel to Al Jazeera's more distant global news. As one scans through the headlines to garner an idea of what is going on in the world you could easily be forgiven for thinking that, COVID aside, it was all pretty quiet out there, as everyone, worldwide, struggles with becoming, remaining or emerging from being locked down. But hidden away amongst the white noise of COVID are the muscle movements that should receive the full attention of the strategically-minded observer or the professionally curious soldier. Last week Angus Lapsley, now the DG Strategy and International in the MoD (and immediately before that the Director for Defence, International Security, and South-east Europe in the FCO), treated CHACR regulars to a real 'tour-de-force tour d'horizon' during his excellent webinar. He took us round the world helping us to catch a glimpse of those major events that, like distant planets, may move on, largely unseen by us, but whose irresistible gravitational pull may draw us in. Yet I was struck by how many of the questions that were posed to him from a wide-ranging audience drew him, irresistibly, back into 'what will Coronavirus mean for the UK and, specifically, for the IR?' Yet China keeps pushing the boundaries in the Pacific and South China Sea, while 'chesting-up' to India in the Himalayas, and changing the whole game in Hong Kong; dynamics in Syria, Turkey, Russia and Iraq still pull and push at each other; Yemen still endures "the worst humanitarian crisis in the last one hundred years"; Putin plays his 'President for Life' card; and so on. Brexit held our attention so firmly that Coronavirus seemed to descend upon us like a storm from a clear blue sky - but that's just because we had given up with the long-range forecast. Angus Lapsley's comprehensive webinar was a timely reminder that, regardless of Coronavirus, we need to keep looking over the horizon.

**Maj Gen (Ret) Dr Andrew Sharpe**

## GLOBAL ANALYSIS

Notes from Global Analysis stream, lead by Dr Ziya Meral

### ANCIENT LESSONS

The COVID-19 era has seen a lot of hyperbolic arguments, partially understandable as we have not seen such a pandemic in our own lifetime, and for sure its international reach has been exceptional. However, the word itself dates back to Hippocrates, and the social and political crisis it triggers has been a debate across centuries. [In this essay, Lawrence Freedman reflects](#) on today's crisis through insights from the ancient world and applies Hippocrates' perfect and imperfect crisis categories to decode some of the issues today.

### VIOLENCE AND CITIES

[This study by IISS](#) based on field research in Mogadishu, Nairobi, Kabul and Karachi tries to answer a fundamental question: how does political violence originate and how is it amplified in cities affected by the conflict? Urbanisation increases the risks of local tensions and poor governance. Important to reflect on social and political dynamics behind unrests and conflicts in the city to help deepen urban warfare conversations beyond tactical questions of force development.

### UAE: PUNSHING ABOVE WEIGHT

UAE has silently emerged as a key regional actor both in the Gulf but also across the wider Middle East and North Africa. You can see it developing in 1990s and onwards but reaching a visible level since the so-called Arab Spring in 2011. Today, UAE policies and involvement range from Libya to Yemen and Syria. [This interview with leading expert on the Gulf, Kristian Ulrichsen](#), answers some key questions on emergence of the UAE. It also highlights the risks and shortcomings of UAE activism: it already pulled out of Yemen with not much to demonstrate as success. Similarly in Libya, it lost its vision in backing Haftar with Turkish support to UN backed government in Tripoli, and in the process made enemies across the region.



If Yemen was 100 people:

- 80 need aid to survive.
- 66 have almost nothing to eat.
- 64 have no access to health care.
- 58 are without clean water.
- 11 are severely malnourished.

But Yemen is not 100 people.

It's 30.5 million people.

### THINGS TO KEEP ON YOUR RADAR SCREENS

- **Germany**

Germany [disbands elite commando force](#) partially due to far right concerns

- **Egypt and North Sinai**

A good [analysis on Egyptian counterterrorism operations](#) in North Sinai

- **Lebanon: Autopsy of Collapse**

This [interview on Lebanese economy](#) has a lot of insights on the country and wider psychology of a crisis

- **Hiding Stalin's Genocide**

This [essay on the new movie](#) Mr Jones looks at how Soviet genocide in Ukraine were hidden and relativised

- **Post Pandemic State**

A good [BBC Radio 4 discussion on 'big government'](#) that sustained UK during COVID-19 and what next.

- **Military Contractors**

[Brown University study on military contractors](#) finds high costs in operations



## HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Notes from Historical Analysis stream, lead by Dr Matthias Strohn

### VOICES FROM HISTORY

This year saw the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War. As a consequence of this time span, the knowledge of the war is now moving from living memory to history. It is therefore of great importance to capture the voices, experiences and memories of those who lived through the cataclysmic events between 1939 and 1945. The author and historian James Holland has conducted a vast amount of interviews over the years and he has now made these available to the [public](#). It is a fascinating collection and worth exploring. The real value lies in the fact that the interviews are not restricted to one nation, army, or service. Amongst others, there are interviews with British, American, Commonwealth and German soldiers. This is a very good starting point if you wish to learn about what the war was like for those who were there. The website is also very useful to those conducting battle-field studies, and the first-hand accounts can be used to bring the stories and stands to life.

### SHOOTING IN THE OLD DAYS

One thing that soldiers of at all times and of all nationalities have shared is the tendency to complain about their equipment. As the saying goes, 'as long as the soldiers complain, all is well, we need to worry when they stop complaining'. And yet, we should not forget that all armies have come a long way with regards to equipment in all shapes and forms. As a reminder of how different and difficult soldiering was in the 'good old days', [this video](#) shows the complexities of loading and firing a Brown Bess musket and Baker Rifle. Once you have seen it you will think twice about saying something bad about an SA80.

### TODAY IN HISTORY



On 1 July 1916, the battle of the Somme started. This battle remains one of the most controversial battles in British military history, and the reasons for the battle, its conduct and the final outcome are still hotly debated today. One reason for this were the extremely high losses that the British Army suffered on the first day -approximately 60,000 in total, the highest daily casualty rate in the history of the Army. A break-through was not achieved, but the battle weakened the German Army, which was not in the position to re-fill its depleted ranks in a way comparable to the Entente powers. It should not be overlooked, as it often is, that this was not a purely British offensive. The French Army participated in the southern sector and played a major role in this struggle, which lasted a full 140 days, until 18 November 1916. The overall casualties are still debated, but they sit in the region of 420,000 British, 200,000 French and 420,000 for the Germans.



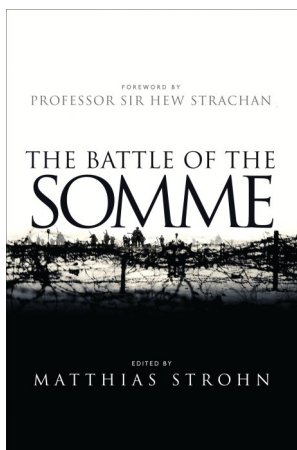
## CHACR TEAM RECOMMENDS

### Ulf Laessing, *Understanding Libya Since Gaddafi*

It is difficult to turn on TV and check foreign policy platforms without noticing harsh criticism of Turkish intervention in Libya in support of the UN backed government by France, which supported strong-man-in-waiting Haftar along with its backers UA and Egypt. Rewind the clock back to 2011 then to the US lead intervention against Qaddafi, it would not have been possible to forecast a Turkey-France diplomatic crisis over Libya. This recently released book makes a great job capturing all that has happened in lead up to and since the toppling of Qaddafi . Libya is set to remain as a chaotic and complex as it is now with substantial geopolitical, geo-energy and security questions that will haunt Europe. A helpful and easy reading.

### Matthias Strohn, *The Battle of the Somme*

As part of the Army's Operation Reflect (the commemoration of the centenary of the First World War), CHACR's own Dr Strohn edited a book entitled *The Battle of the Somme*. This book was the core



reading for the 2016 British Army Op Reflect battlefield study to the Somme. The book offers an in-depth analysis of the battle. What sets this book apart is the fact that it pays attention not only to the British Army, but all nations' armies that were involved, in addition to offering insights into the wider political and strategic context. It therefore provides a wider perspective of this dramatic battle than most popular literature available in the English language. As such, the book does not

only offer historical insights, but raises questions about cultural awareness of one's friends and foes, a pre-requisite for success in modern war.

### Phillipe Sands, *East West Street*

An invitation to give a lecture on international human rights law in the now-Ukrainian, once-Polish, formerly Austrian city of Lviv, starts the author on a journey to uncover his family's past, and the origins of key concepts in international human rights law. Lviv – once known as Lwow, and before that, Lemberg - was once a cultural and intellectual hub of Central Europe, and home to Sands' maternal grandfather. Seeking to learn more about his grandfather's tragic experience of the Holocaust by learning more about the city's history, Sands discovered that two of the architects of modern international humanitarian law were also from Lviv, and were contemporaries of his grandfather. Both Hersch Lauterpracht and Rafael Lemkin were highly regarded legal scholars who pursued successful careers in the UK and the US, and both developed parallel concepts of modern international law – crimes against humanity and genocide - that would form part of the Nuremberg judgments, and that continue to shape international law. Deftly written, this is a moving, memorable and highly readable account of family, tragedy, law and justice. Winner of the Baillie Gifford Prize for non-fiction, this deserves a spot on your bookshelf.

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## ABOUT THE CHACR

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

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