



EDITORIAL LEADER

Hopefully, as the fact that you are reading this suggests you will have done, you have read the commentary article entitled *Ukraine Early Lessons* which was posted on our website on the 31st of March. This *Digest*, unsurprisingly, has a series of links that resonate with that article, and should help you in your “so what for us?” thinking. The first three suggested articles to read, by Ed Arnold, Natia Seskuria and Ana Matveeva, all follow on very neatly from the thoughts raised in that piece, and allow you to dig deeper into those lines of enquiry that should be troubling your professional curiosity. These, along with Dr Robin Niblett’s article, should allow you to have a deeper ponder upon the extant relevance of the posture proposed by the Integrated Review. And, as ever, we remind you that while Ukraine holds our attention, there is much else afoot in the world that should not escape your notice as you switch your gaze back and forth between the outskirts of Kyiv and the more open terrain of the Donbas. – Maj Gen (Retd) Dr A R D Sharpe CBE, Director CHACR

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WAR IN UKRAINE

As the war in Ukraine moves into its second month, with Ukrainian forces beginning to retake ground in the North of the country, the conflict and its geopolitical ramifications still dominate the headlines across the world.

The Royal United Services Institute’s coverage of the war and its various dimensions and implications has produced a wide range of analysis and reporting. Ed Arnold [assesses](#) Ukraine’s will to fight back, highlighting the extraordinary achievements of the Ukrainian military, as well as the impressive performance by President Zelensky and many of his ministers. Natia Seskuria [looks](#) at how the Russian government is doubling down on repression at home to keep the population in check and to keep the bad news coming from Ukraine at bay. Ana Matveeva [argues](#) that while peace seems a distant prospect at present, the West and the international community must continue to look for opportunities to not just help Ukraine prevail, but also to end the conflict, including through negotiations with Moscow. Ismet Fatih Čančar, finally, [suggests](#) that Bosnia may become the next theatre for Russia to sow chaos as Milorad Dodik, President of Republika Srpska and a close ally of Vladimir Putin, continues his efforts to dismantle the fragile peace settlement established by the Dayton Agreement in 1995, increasing the risk of renewed violent escalation.

Another piece worth reading is Stephen Walt’s [International Relations Theory Guide to the War in Ukraine](#) – one of the world’s pre-eminent international relations professors looks at how our thinking about international politics and war measures up against reality.

WHAT SHOULD GLOBAL BRITAIN DO?

In a highly divided and insecure world (only reinforced by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine) Britain must still assert its interests. In his latest paper [Global Britain in a divided world](#), Director of Chatham House Dr Robin Niblett assesses the four key pillars of the 2021 Integrated Review which are (1) uphold an international order supportive of liberal democratic values; (2) contribute to the security of this order; (3) help build greater global resilience to the impacts of climate change and health insecurity and promote sustainable development; and (4) pursue an international economic agenda that strengthens the UK’s global competitiveness and supports the welfare of its citizens. Niblett notes that although the current government has invested in maintaining the international order, it needs to do more. The current crisis with Russia is a chance to rebuild UK-EU relations, empower the G7 and use its trading relationships to take account for the highly competitive world that will emerge vis-à-vis China and Russia.



UK-GULF RELATIONS: EAST OF SUEZ?

On 16 March, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson travelled to the Gulf to visit Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. His main aim was to convince Riyadh and Abu Dhabi to boost oil production in order to bring down prices. His requests were rebuffed. The Gulf states insist that they will stick with the gradual production increases agreed by OPEC+ in 2021 when oil demands were still sluggish following the sharp global economic downturn caused by the pandemic. Johnson's visit has revived a classic debate in British foreign policy: What is the UK's role in the Gulf, and what should it look like? In the early 2010s, the return to 'East of Suez' was supposed to ring in a new era in British foreign policy, but the momentum of this strategy was upended by Brexit and has since been replaced by the 'Tilt to the Indo-Pacific' announced in the Integrated Review. David Roberts has penned an valuable [op-ed](#) acknowledging the moral dilemma of dealing with the Gulf states – and other authoritarian governments – but making the case for clear-eyed engagement.

IRAN DEAL IN LIMBO

The Iran nuclear deal remains in limbo. Russia appears to have withdrawn its demands that sanctions placed on it due to its invasion of Ukraine should not apply to potential future trade with Iran. Still, the nuclear deal remains unsigned. The latest sticking point is Iran's insistence that the US remove the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) from its list of Foreign Terrorist Organisations (FTO). This has prompted a vigorous debate, particularly in the US. Some argue that removing the designation would make no material difference since the IRGC would remain under US sanctions regardless of whether or not it is on the FTO list (read Esfandiyar Batmanghelidj's case for this [here](#)); others such as this [piece](#) by Matthew Levitt insist that lifting the designation would send a signal that the US at least tacitly accepts the IRGC's aggressive behaviour in the region, especially at a time when Iran's allies in Yemen, the Houthis, are firing rockets into Saudi Arabia on a daily basis.



DAESH TERROR IN ISRAEL

On 27 March, terrorists who had previously pledged allegiance to Daesh, [killed](#) two police officers and injured six other people in the northern Israeli city of Hadera. This was followed by [a third attack](#) in the city of Bnei Brak on 29 March. The attacks are significant for several reasons: Firstly, they occurred only days after another attack in Beersheba on 22 March in which four people were killed, also conducted by a Daesh-linked individual. Secondly, it was these are the first officially claimed Daesh attacks in Israel since 2017. Thirdly, the attacks occurred as Israel was hosting a [historic summit](#) attended by US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, as well as the Foreign Ministers of four Arab states: Bahrain, Egypt, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates.



WIDER READING

Francis Fukuyama, known famously for his declaration of the "End of History" has released a new book entitled *Liberalism and its Discontents*, in which he describes Liberal values as being under severe attack both from without and within Democratic societies, [in this short book](#) Fukuyama launches into a defence of liberalism as a doctrine that we should seek to preserve despite constant attacks from the political extremes.

In a provocative work [The New Map](#), Daniel Yergin argues that a new type of Cold War is emerging between China and the West. The global order is being simultaneously shaken by climate change and the shale revolution in oil and gas. The *New Map* explains how the role of energy in climate change is shaping geopolitical discussions, challenging our industries and our lifestyles, and accelerating a second energy revolution – the quest for renewables.



NEWS STORIES TO WATCH OUT FOR

As the war in Ukraine and its multi-dimensional repercussions continue to dominate headlines, here are some other topics to keep an eye on:

In Hungary, after ten years in power [Viktor Orban is up for re-election](#), his legislative reforms have meant this election is unlikely to be fully open and fair.

In order to combat rising oil prices, President Joe Biden plans to [release up to a million barrels a day](#) from the US strategic reserve.

Syrian President [Bashar al-Assad's visit to the UAE](#) signals the next step or normalisation between the Syrian regime and the rest of the Arab world.

In the US, the [trial for a member of the so-called Daesh Beatles](#) cell is set to begin.

As China begins significant lockdowns in Shanghai, some frustrated Chinese are beginning to [openly resist](#) the government's zero-covid policy.

Germany is considering [buying Israel's Iron Dome](#) missile defence system.

COVID RECORDS IN CHINA

Covid cases are surging in China, reaching numbers not seen since the beginning of the pandemic. Local authorities are resorting to measures that seem to be a thing of the past in other parts of the world. On 28 March, Shanghai, a city of 26 million, [began a lockdown](#) in an attempt to curb the spread of the virus, following the example of other major population centres in recent weeks. Since overcoming the first wave of the pandemic in early/mid-2020, China has pursued a draconian 'Zero-Covid' strategy designed to effectively keep the virus out of the country. Combined with relatively ineffective vaccines, this has led to a very low level of immunity amongst the population, making it more vulnerable to outbreaks that are now rapidly spiralling out of control. This [article](#) in The Economist explains the costs of Beijing's Zero-Covid strategy, particularly with regard to manpower; this [article](#) by Jessie Lau explains how China has fallen into the Zero-Covid trap, leaving it battling the pandemic while much of the rest of the world is moving on.



Picture: Joshua Fernandez on Unsplash

IS IT ALL OVER FOR IMRAN KHAN?

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran faces the looming prospect of a no confidence vote in his leadership, which he is expected to lose. [This analysis](#) from the University of Birmingham's Umer Karim explains how the PM has grown increasingly distant from the security and military power in the country that backed him so strongly in 2018. The [BBC's Abid Hussain](#), also agrees that Khan's break with the security forces, and inability to control the cost of living have placed him in real political trouble. In response to increasing disapproval from Pakistan's military elites Khan has rallied support behind him, hosting large rallies across the country, and blaming foreign backed conspiracies for trying to oust him. This will all lead to a potential show down between Khan and those seeking his removal, that could have dramatic consequences for the stability of the country.

OUT NOW & UP NEXT...

● *"It is premature to suggest that we can already see the full range of insights and lessons that Ukraine will have to offer. But if we understand the nature of war, and the nature and character of the protagonists of war (each unique and varied according to their contexts) we have a much better chance of preparing well for future challenges."* If you have not done so already, read the latest [CHACR Commentary \(Ukraine: Early lessons or too early to tell\)](#) – and other recent releases – online at [chacr.org.uk](#) or email info@chacr.org.uk to request a printable copy to be sent to your inbox.



● On 11 May, the CHACR and U.S. European Command's Russia Strategic Initiative is hosting an event at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Open to attendance for UK, US and Allied defence personnel, *Understanding Russia: Beginning of a new era?* will run from 0900-1300. To register your place, email info@chacr.org.uk.




CHACR COMMENTARY | MARCH 31, 2022
By Maj Gen (Retd) Dr A D Shapiro CBE, Director CHACR

UKRAINE – EARLY LESSONS OR TOO EARLY TO TELL?

"THE FIGHT IN UKRAINE, EVEN AFTER SUCH A SHORT TIME, HAS LESSONS THAT SHOULD PROMPT US TO MOVE INTO A RATHER MORE URGENT FRAME OF MIND."

1 | UKRAINE – EARLY LESSONS | CHACR



CHACR COMMENTARY | MARCH 22, 2022
By Maj Gen (Retd) Dr A D Shapiro CBE, Director CHACR

A TYPHOON IN A TEACUP.. OR HAS GERMANY WOKEN UP?

"A DRAGNET OF THE ANNUAL DEFENCE BUDGET WILL MAKE GERMANY THE BIGGEST SPENDER ON DEFENCE IN EUROPE AND THE THIRD LARGEST IN THE WORLD."

1 | HAS GERMANY WOKEN UP? | CHACR



IN-DEPTH BRIEFING | #25 | MARCH 22

MAKING SENSE OF MALI

MALI'S current political situation is the result of a complex interplay of factors, including the impact of the 2012 coup, the 2013 intervention, and the 2020 coup. The current situation is a result of a complex interplay of factors, including the impact of the 2012 coup, the 2013 intervention, and the 2020 coup. The current situation is a result of a complex interplay of factors, including the impact of the 2012 coup, the 2013 intervention, and the 2020 coup.

4 | IN-DEPTH BRIEFING | CHACR