

CHACR *DIGEST* #4



EDITORIAL LEADER

The withdrawal of the Russian Army from the north of Ukraine seems to be laying bare the evidence of an awful suspicion turning into an awful truth, in terms of the conduct of Russia's soldiers towards the people of occupied Ukraine. The big challenge for the so-called 'rules-based world order', and all of those who advocate its importance, will be to see how the rules-based world can uphold order by gathering irrefutable evidence that the rules have been broken – from the act of invasion to the horrific detail of its execution – (perhaps the relatively easier of two tasks), and then demonstrating to the nations of the world, who are supposedly subject to that order, that rule-breakers can be held to account (surely the tougher of the two tasks). The consequences of Russia's actions continue to mount (and the first five paragraphs of this issue of the *CHACR Digest* point you towards just those issues). It may be, however, that for future historians, how the world manages the aftermath of this year's events will turn out to be more important than the events themselves.

– Maj Gen (Retd) Dr A R D Sharpe CBE, Director CHACR

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THE CYBER WAR

As the war in Ukraine has developed significantly over the past fortnight, Russian forces have largely pulled back from Kyiv and redeployed to Ukraine's Eastern and Southeastern regions. The Russian push East has been bolstered by the fall of Mariupol to Russian forces this week. Nevertheless there are still big questions to ask about Russian capabilities, [in this piece](#) *The National Interest* asks why Russia has been unable to dominate the Cyber War arena, despite its much feted capabilities. Three main reasons appear to govern Russia's relative lack of strength, 1) Russian leaders wanted to control escalation; 2) Assuming a quick victory, it was decided not to attack infrastructure as Russian occupying forces and/or political allies in Kyiv would need it; 3) Many Russian cyberattacks that did take place were successfully repelled.

NATO TO EXPAND?

In another blow to Russia's geostrategic position it seems inevitable that [Sweden and Finland will now join NATO](#). Finland and Sweden's fates have long been intertwined, with an understanding that the two countries would always join together, should they choose to do so. Both countries, in particular Finland, have historically been hesitant to push for membership. But with largely supportive publics and the concerns about aggravating Moscow rendered moot, Finland is now pushing the debate forward. As a consequence [Elizabeth Braw argues](#) that the time has never been better for Sweden to make that final push for NATO membership too.

THE BALANCE OF POWER BETWEEN RUSSIA AND NATO IN THE HIGH NORTH

Russia's posture in the Arctic and High North represents both a challenge and an asymmetrical opportunity for NATO. In a [new Whitehall Paper](#) research by RUSI has evaluated the posture and presence of Russian forces in the Arctic using a combination of satellite imagery and open-source intelligence. The analysis takes Russian capabilities seriously but suggests that Moscow's northern defence is its soft underbelly, that a more aggressive NATO posture might seek to exploit.

THE WAR AND ITS IMPACT ON FOOD PRICES

Want to know why your groceries are now so expensive? [This piece](#) explains how Russia's status as a major exporter of raw materials, especially oil and natural gas, along with Ukraine's position as a key agricultural supplier to regions including Africa and the Middle East, make the conflict between the two countries a flashpoint for commodity prices, which were already on the rise due to the pandemic.



INDIA'S POSITION

India's dogged refusal to join the West in denouncing Russia's invasion of Ukraine has led to much consternation in Washington, London and across the European continent. [This Economist article](#) offers an at least partial explanation. It argues that the strategic autonomy New Delhi covets remains illusive as it remains economically and – especially – militarily dependent on outsiders. This includes a deep and long-standing relationship between the Indian and Russian defence industries.



WIDER READING

Questions about Britain's role in the world have perplexed British policymakers ever since the fall of Empire, but British Foreign Policy has been a topic of particularly intense scrutiny since leaving the European Union in 2020. In [What Next for Britain in the Middle East?](#) Dr Chris Phillips and Michael Stephens try to answer the key questions for British policy and its future role in the Middle East. The book situates the region's many tensions within larger frameworks of geopolitics, economics, and human rights. The Authors conclude that the UK cannot just walk away from the Middle East, but must be better focused and invest more resources across a narrower range of interests.



CHINA'S PLANS FOR WARFARE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

America may finally be getting to grips with the scale of war in the information age, but China is looking to move the game forward again. In [this War on the Rocks article](#), Koichiro Tagaki notes that China is developing a new concept of warfare called "intelligentized warfare". The core operational concept of intelligentized warfare is to directly control the enemy's will. The idea is to use AI to directly control the will of the highest decision-makers, including the president, members of Congress, and combatant commanders, as well as citizens. "Intelligence dominance" or "control of the brain" will become new areas of the struggle for control in intelligentized warfare, putting AI to a very different use than most American and allied discussions have envisioned.

INSTABILITY SPREADS ACROSS LATIN AMERICA

After two years of Covid restrictions, Latin American economies are already in a weakened state. But this situation has been made worse in developing economies as the price of food and staple goods rises on the back of supply chain shortages. 2022 is likely another complicated year for the region, with several potential flashpoints and risks worth monitoring. To help analyse the region's fragility [IISS has produced The Latin America Instability Matrix](#) which provides an easy to understand guide to problematic areas and/or signs of possible instability at the country level, while identifying cross-cutting factors that could either attenuate or exacerbate the latter.



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:

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison [has announced](#) that Australia will go to new elections on 21 May.

Shehbaz Sharif is [Pakistan's new Prime Minister](#); he takes over from Imran Khan who was ousted in a no-confidence vote.

The latest lockdown measures to curb the spread of Covid-19 in China appear to be [less effective](#).

Israel is reeling from a [spate of terrorist attacks](#), some of which appear to be related to Daesh.

As Germany is mulling its role in Mali, it is [calling on authorities in Bamako](#) to cut ties with Russian mercenaries.

In Colombia, violence is being fuelled by arms [smuggled in by Mexican cartels](#) that usually move drugs in the other direction.

Taiwan has issued a [‘war survival handbook’](#) as fears of Chinese aggression grow.

CAN MARINE LE PEN BEAT MACRON?

Although it was not a surprise that Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen were chosen as the final two candidates in France’s Presidential election, the dynamics are quite different from when they squared off five years ago. Le Pen recorded the highest ever vote total for a far right party in the first round of voting in early April and looks set to run Macron close in the second round. And so, with Le Pen trying hard to de-toxifying the “Le Pen” brand, [this article](#) asks whether it really is possible that she can win.

A TRUCE AND POLITICAL CHANGE IN YEMEN

In late March, the war in Yemen entered its eighth year. While a resolution to the conflict still appears a ways away, there have been some significant political and military developments in recent weeks. On 2 April, coinciding with the beginning Ramadan, a truce took effect. In Yemen itself, some fighting has continued, but Houthi rocket attacks on Saudi Arabia have, at least for the moment, stopped. In an effort to unite some of Yemen’s political factions, Riyadh has brokered a change in the Yemeni government it has been supporting against the Iran-backed Houthis since 2015: On 9 April, President Hadi transferred power to a Presidential Council that is now supposed to try to reach a settlement with the Houthis – Gregory Johnsen, one of the pre-eminent experts on Yemen, [is not convinced](#) that it will work. Meanwhile, the US Navy is [setting up a new task force](#) to crack down on arms smuggling in the waters surrounding Yemen – its main focus will be on Iranian weapons transfers to the Houthis in the Red Sea, the Bab al-Mandeb and the Gulf of Aden.



OUT NOW & UP NEXT..

● “What we have witnessed in Ukraine is an important reminder of the purpose and value of the laws of armed conflict. Once a conflict is located in a civilian area, the application of these rules can become complex and we cannot always evaluate their reality from news reports. But that does not mean that we should do nothing in response.” If you have not done so already, read CHACR’s latest *In-Depth Briefing (War Crimes in Ukraine?)* – and other recent releases – online at [chacr.org.uk](#)

