



EDITORIAL LEADER

The UK's Integrated Review was clear that the focus of UK strategy was to remain on the preservation of the so-called 'Rules-based World Order', with the 'rules' finding their foundation in the UN Charter, drawn up after two World Wars to ensure that the world would never again find itself plunged into global conflict. Article 1 of that Charter sets out the bottom line, making it clear from the outset that every country was in agreement that it would leave every other country to its own affairs and that national boundaries were uncrossable. The virtual world, the cyber world, does not recognise those boundaries. Disease and pandemics do not recognise those boundaries. Climate change does not recognise those boundaries. And now it is clear that it is very hard to deal with those national leaders, even though they may be signatories of that Charter, who wield enough levers of power and who choose not to recognise those boundaries, without resorting to exactly the kind of conflict that the UN Charter was designed to avoid. Security professionals and strategists, in and out of uniform (including here at the CHACR), have rightly been focussed on events in Ukraine. But Ukraine is merely a part of the jigsaw of the 2020s that needs to be assembled to provide the basis of thought that will be required for the building of a new approach to strategic security – both national and global. As we scan the horizon, while giving Ukraine our best attention, we will need to think very hard about what might constitute the 'New-rules-based World Order' that we will need to champion for the future in order to deal with all of those challenges that the Twenty-first Century has already thrown at us. – **Maj Gen (Retd) Dr A R D Sharpe CBE, Director CHACR**



Ukrainian soldiers inspecting the charred remains of a Russian military convoy in Bucha on April 2, 2022. Credit: Daniel Berehulak for The New York Times / CC BY 2.0

OPERATION Z

Jack Watling and Nick Reynolds at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) have authored a new report titled [Operation Z: The Death Throes of an Imperial Delusion](#). In the paper, the two authors, whose previous work includes [The Plot to Destroy Ukraine](#), published on the eve of the war, draw together conclusions from the analysis of various aspects related to the conflict – from the military developments on the ground, to the war's global economic implications. Building on in-person interviews and fieldwork, they argue that after failing to achieve its war aims in the first few weeks of the invasion, Russia is now preparing, diplomatically, militarily and economically, for a protracted conflict. This inevitably poses a new set of security challenges for the UK, Europe and countries around the world. The report's annex also includes details on foreign-made components inside Russian military equipment.

THE RUSSIA MILITARY REPORT

There has been much talk about the role Battalion Tactical Groups (BTGs) play in Russian military operations, especially in the war in Ukraine. In the latest [article](#) of the RUSI's *The Russia Military Report* series, Lester Grau and Charles Bartles provide an overview of the historical origins and capabilities of the Russian BTGs and assess the role they are meant to play in Russian military thinking. In the first [contribution](#), published in early April, Sam Cranny-Evans and Dr Sidharth Kaushal explored the reasons the initial phase of Russia's invasion of Ukraine failed. The series is part of RUSI's [The Red Team Project: Understanding the Enemy](#), which has previously also examined aspects of Chinese military structure and doctrine.

NATO AND RUSSIA IN THE HIGH NORTH

The RUSI has published a new Whitehall Paper on the Balance of Power Between Russia and NATO in the Arctic and the High North (an interactive executive summary is available on the RUSI [website](#)). In the paper, the authors argue that Russia's posture in the region represents both a challenge and an asymmetrical opportunity for NATO. They highlight the challenge Russia's activities in the Arctic and High North pose for the freedom of action of other actors – including NATO and others – in the area, but also identify defensive weaknesses in the Russian posture. The paper covers Russia's submarine fleet, its base and radar infrastructure, and strategic and tactical thinking about the region. The [Global Security Briefing](#) podcast has a mini-series on the subject (starting with episode 23).

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WAR WILL CHANGE GLOBAL ENERGY MARKETS

In this [piece](#), Robin Mills argues that we are seeing a fundamental shift in global oil patterns as a result of the war in Ukraine. Middle Eastern and Asian producers have until recently sent 77% of their production to Asia, and only 16% to Europe. Conversely until the outbreak of war Russia exported 53% of its exports to Europe and 33% to Asia. However, this pattern looks set to shift, the UAE is already sending more tankers to Europe, and Russia which is subject to a phased ban by Europe, will begin to export increasingly to Asian markets as its access to Europe declines. Russia's logistics and supply chains make this a very difficult switch to make, however we are now on the cusp of a huge change in global energy flows. Which will happen relatively quickly and have serious geopolitical consequences.

HOW MACRON LOST THE LEFT

Although Emmanuel Macron prevailed in France's recent Presidential election with 58.5% of the vote, there are important trends that offer cause for concern. Turnout was strong at over 70% in the second round, however it is clear that Macron's support has increasingly been focused into cities, while Le Pen's support in the surrounding districts increased substantially. Mr Macron won handily in the big cities: 85% in Paris, 80 in Bordeaux, 78 in Strasbourg, 80 in Lyon and 77 in Toulouse. But Le Pen won in the northern, former mining towns and villages still recovering from post-war industrial decline, as well as Mediterranean coastal towns. [This piece argues](#) that Macron's appeal to traditional left wing voters has declined and was one of the causes for the closer race this time around. [This analysis](#) shows in clearly outlined images and maps that Macron has lost large geographies in the country, despite his "cordon sanitaire" of voters uniting to defeat the far right.

US SEEKS ANTI-SATELLITE WEAPONS TESTING BAN

The Biden administration is working towards and international agreement that would ban the testing of anti-satellite weapons, as Courtney Albon [writes](#) in Defence News. By suspending its own tests, the US hopes to convince other countries to follow suit and to engage in a UN-hosted arms control working group process that could eventually lead to an international ban on tests. As ever, the big question is of course whether Russia would be prepared to engage in discussions on the subject – particularly as its war in Ukraine continues. That space is becoming an increasingly important domain of competition between global powers is clear. In fact, perhaps more than in any other domain, in space, governments will also have to content and/or cooperate with private sector actors. That was impressively underscored by developments such as Space X's (a company run by Elon Musk) [successful disruption](#) of a Russian electromagnetic attack on its Starlink satellite broadband service in Ukraine last month.

US NAVY EXPANSION PLAN

The US navy has published its 30-year plan to expand its fleet. Find a useful write up of the issues at hand in this [US Congress report](#), or by following the analysis of [Megan Eckstein](#) and [others](#) at Defence News. In general, it appears uncertain whether the Pentagon will follow through on the goal announced in 2016 expand the US fleet to 355 ships. The leadership of the Navy is keen to focus on expanding capacity, rather than bringing in many new systems and technologies, particularly as Washington continues to see the Indo-Pacific region as the centre of gravity for US military operations over the coming decades.



WIDER READING

A serious debate has begun about how to trade global commodities in currencies other than the dollar. Russia is insisting on Rouble transactions for its oil, and elsewhere Saudi Arabia is mulling over trading barrels of oil in Chinese RMB. This leads to wider questions about the longevity of the Dollar as the global reserve currency. In [Principles for Dealing with the Changing World Order: Why Nations Succeed or Fail](#) Ray Dalio argues that Empires rise and fall based on their dominance of the global financial order, allowing them to lend and borrow money at terms favourable to them. The warning signs of imperial decline happen once this currency dominance is challenged, leading to the rise of alternative powers in the global order. Dalio's thesis about the rise and fall of great powers makes essential reading for those who are trying to understand the events of today, and why great powers rise and fall in a relatively cyclical fashion.





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 Yemen, [a fragile truce, in place since 2 April, remains in place](#), giving rise to hopes that a more permanent ceasefire can be negotiated.

Health authorities in north-western Congo have announced the detection of [new Ebola cases](#) in the country.

An upsurge of violence in [Sudan's Darfur region](#) has already claimed the lives of some 168 people, according to aid groups.

In China, [Covid lockdowns](#) continue to negatively impact growth forecasts.

[Clashes between Israeli security forces and Palestinians in Jerusalem](#) could escalate as tensions also grow at Israel's borders with Lebanon and the Gaza Strip.

Ahead of Brazil's presidential elections in October, a [two-man race](#) is taking shape with former President Lula challenging incumbent Jair Bolsonaro.

IRAN DISPLAYS NEW SYSTEMS

During a parade on 19 April in Tehran, the Iranian military has displayed a number of previously unseen systems, including what appears to be a new air defence system and unmanned vehicles; this write up by [Janes](#) provides useful additional information. This comes after the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) had promoted and displayed some of its missile systems at a defence show in Doha in late March (which caused [consternation](#) in Washington that Qatar had given the IRGC such a platform). Iran's missile and drone programmes have increasingly moved to the centre of concerns about regional security in the Gulf and the wider Middle East region in recent years, most obviously illustrated by the frequent missile and drone attacks on targets in Saudi Arabia and the UAE by the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen. To read more about Iran's missiles, this 2019 [piece](#) by Anthony Cordesman, and this more recent [commentary](#) by Jim Lamson in War on the Rocks are useful starting points.

OMAN'S UNCERTAIN FUTURE

The Sultanate of Oman is arguably the UK's closest partner in the Gulf region and the wider Middle East, with relations built on a historical friendship has included – amongst other things – UK military intervention to help secure the Omani government of the late Sultan Qaboos in the 1970s. However, in the early 1920s, Oman faces an uncertain future. Sultan Haitham, who succeeded Qaboos in early 2020, seems intent on maintaining his countries general direction, including its famous foreign policy based on the principle of neutrality. However, economic pressures and an ever more complex regional and global strategic environment may make this position increasingly difficult to maintain. In this [episode](#) of *The Red Line* podcast, host Michael Hilliard speaks to three experts to explore how things might develop in the coming years.



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OUT NOW & UP NEXT..

● *“Although it would be folly to not remain conscious and cognisant of the other threats and challenges that currently exist globally and those that will evolve in the future, we [the British Army] should never stop thinking about Russia.” – Brig John Clark, Head of Army Strategy*

The latest issue of CHACR's latest *Ares & Athena, (Re)thinking Russia*, is out now and available online – along with other recent releases – at [chacr.org.uk](#)

