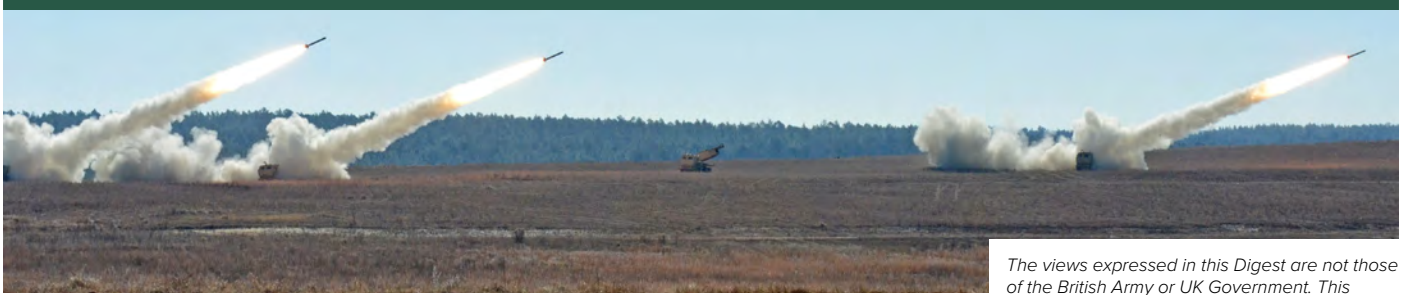


CHACR DIGEST #8



Picture: U.S. Army/Sgt. Steven M. Cobain



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SECRET NETWORK COORDINATING WEAPONS TO UKRAINE

The volume of NATO assistance to Ukraine is now well documented, the sheer volume of weapons, ammunition and assistance stretches into the tens of billions of dollars. However what is less well known is the coordination and logistical planning behind this extensive operation. In this [excellent piece of reporting](#) *The New York Times* goes deep into the spying and special forces networks working on the ground to support the Ukrainian war effort. A combination of American forces (with command and control in Ramstein Airbase in Germany) alongside a plethora of international actors, are training and equipping Ukrainian forces in real time to use more advanced weapons systems such as HIMARS [three of which are pictured firing during a US Army training serial at Fort Bragg] to help give the Ukrainians on the ground a chance at fighting back, even as their casualties begin to mount.

WILL THE KALININGRAD CRISIS LEAD TO WAR?

Lithuania's recent move to block off the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad has significantly raised tensions between Russia and NATO states. This [informative discussion](#) between Atlantic Council Analysts Emma Ashford and Matthew Kroening discusses the potential escalation pathways that have emerged from what is a legitimate, but undeniably dangerous move from Lithuania. The analysts debate the cost that should be imposed on Russia at this stage of the Ukraine conflict, and their disagreements are as informative as where they agree. This is an accessible take on a complex and fast-moving development.

WHAT NEXT FOR NATO?

The war in Ukraine will inevitably dominate discussions at the upcoming NATO Summit in Madrid; Ukraine's President Zelensky is due to attend (likely online). The main output of the summit, however, is supposed to be the Alliance's new Strategic Concept, meant to guide NATO's political and military development over the coming years. Russia will feature heavily, but members will also grapple with questions about China, climate change, and how security in the Middle East and North Africa – the Alliance's southern neighbourhood – fit in. [The Atlantic Council](#) offers a valuable (and visually appealing) set of possibilities of how to think about NATO's future. In this [piece](#), Frank Gardner outlines what he sees as the five key challenges for NATO which include security in the Baltic States, avoiding escalation in Ukraine, and managing large rises in defence spending across the alliance.

BIDEN IS GOING TO SAUDI ARABIA

On the campaign trail, Joe Biden talked about treating Saudi Arabia like a 'pariah state'; 18 months into his presidency, Biden is now preparing to visit Riyadh and meet with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, as well as a number of head of states from across the region. Energy, specifically Saudi Arabia's preparedness to pump more oil to bring down international prices, will be at the top of the agenda, as will the Gulf states' ambivalent reaction to Russia's war against Ukraine. In *The Atlantic*, Andrew Exum offers a [useful analysis](#) of the political considerations surrounding the visit, making the case for a realist engagement with Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, Eric Brewer's [piece](#) in *Foreign Affairs* offers a timely reminder that Iran, Saudi Arabia's neighbour, is inching ever closer to being a nuclear power.

WIDER READING

The Taliban have now been in control of Afghanistan for nearly a year. For the West, the Taliban takeover has suddenly closed off a country that has been the destination of so many resources and efforts – military, political, developmental – for more than two decades. Bette Dam's new [book](#) *Looking for the Enemy: Mullah Omar and the Unknown Taliban* is a rich study that can help the reader understand the new men in charge in Kabul.

Flags: shon.pics/freepik.com





NEWS STORIES TO WATCH OUT FOR

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

Colombia has elected its [first left-wing President](#), Gustavo Petro.

In Israel the fragile Lapid-Bennet [coalition has collapsed](#); elections are due in September.

In an effort to manage a flailing economy, President Biden is increasingly looking to the [Defence Procurement Act](#) for short-term solutions.

Burkina Faso is [telling civilians](#) to leave towns and villages ahead of a planned military operation against jihadist groups.

In May, China imported [more oil from Russia](#) than from Saudi Arabia for the first time in decades.

In France, President Macron has to prepare to govern [without a parliamentary majority](#), following the Right and Left's unprecedented electoral successes.

India and Bangladesh are battling increasingly [catastrophic floods](#).

TROUBLE IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

In late May, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared that Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Prime Minister of Greece, 'no longer exists' for him. Turkish-Greek relations have long been tense, and as Erdogan navigates an ever more tense domestic environment, and as more and more countries across Europe look to the Eastern Mediterranean as an alternative source of gas, things have again taken a turn for the worse. That has important implications for security in the region (with Cyprus being a core issue), and for the internal cohesion of NATO. Three analysts at the Israeli Institute for National Security Studies offer an interesting [analysis](#) of the complex relations between Ankara and Athens and what the implications of a continuing deterioration of relations might be.



CHINA IN ITS BIG YEAR



2022 is a big year for China; later this year, the Chinese Communist Party will convene its 20th National Congress, during which President Xi plans to have himself appointed for a third term. It will be interesting to see how China manages the event, particularly as it still struggles to emerge from the pandemic. The Congress also means that it is a timely occasion for the UK and its allies to brush up on where China is going, and who is doing what in Beijing. Axel Berkofsky and Giulia Sciorati at the Italian Institute for International Political Studies have published a useful [overview](#) of the Chinese foreign policy making system. Meanwhile, looking at the harder edge of Chinese power projection, Nick Childs and Douglas Barrie [analyse](#) the launch of China's newest aircraft carrier.

US INTERMEDIATE-RANGE MISSILES IN THE INDO-PACIFIC?

President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw the US from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 2019 has offered the possibility for US ground-based intermediate-range missiles to be stationed in the Indo-Pacific region. Not bound by treaty obligations, China has long been able to develop various capabilities in the region. Jeffrey Hornung at RAND [examines](#) the likelihood that US allies in the region will be willing to host US missiles in the coming years. He argues that their cooperation is far from a foregone conclusion, and suggests that the most effective way to counter the threat from Chinese ground-based intermediate-range missiles may be to help its allies develop their own arsenals, focusing particularly on anti-ship missile capabilities.

OUT NOW & UP NEXT...

● "In Turkey's case, geography shapes its foreign and security policy. That is also the reason why Turkey may appear to be an outlier in NATO. But the future of this relationship is not pre-ordained." – **Sinan Ulgen, director of the Istanbul-based think tank EDAM and visiting scholar at Carnegie Europe considers Turkey's approach to life in the alliance.**

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