



# Summer selection: Chapter one

Picture: Ben White on Unsplash

## ABOUT THIS DIGEST

With beaches beckoning, CHACR presents the *Summer selection* series – a two-part newsletter which will provide you with some longer form pieces for you to digest and while away the hours while you take that well-earned break!

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## BOOKS

[\*The New Map: Energy, Climate, and the Clash of Nations\*](#) by **Daniel Yergin**. Yergin is one of the most authoritative voices on energy security, the history of the hydrocarbon energy industry, and the global energy transition. His 1993 offering – [\*The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power\*](#) – won the Pulitzer Prize and remains one of the best books on the subject. *The New Map* is a highly informative and readable overview of how the shale revolution and other technologies, climate change, and geopolitics fit together.

[\*River of the Gods: Genius, Courage and Betrayal in the Search for the Source of the Nile\*](#) by **Candice Millard**. This is a fascinating history book, detailing how two men – Richard Burton, a decorated soldier who wrote the book for sword-fighting techniques for the British Army and visited Mecca pretending to be a Muslim, and John Hanning Speke, a young aristocrat and Army officer – discovered the source of the Nile in the 19th century.

[\*Erdogan Rising: The Battle for the Soul of Turkey\*](#) by **Hannah Lucinda Smith**. Over the coming year, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has ruled his country for more than 20 years, becoming ever more authoritarian in the process, will face his greatest test yet. As the Turkish economy falters and resistance to his style of governance grows, his re-election is anything but certain. For anyone wanting to learn more about Erdogan and how he has taken control of Turkey, Smith's *Erdogan Rising* offers a very readable foundation.

[\*Rise and Kill First: The Secret History of Israel's Targeted Assassinations\*](#) by **Ronen Bergman**. One of Israel's most formidable investigative journalists, Bergman has written the first definitive history of the targeted killing programmes developed by Israel's Mossad, Shin Bet and the Israeli Defence Forces. His fascinating accounts of known and previously unreported operations are based on interviews with dozens of individuals from the top echelons of Israeli politics and the security establishment.

[\*Kashmir at the Crossroads: Inside a 21st-Century Conflict\*](#) by **Sumantra Bose**. The conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir has brewed for more than 75 years. Over the past three decades alone, more than 60,000 people have been killed. Bose's book offers an authoritative history of the conflict, including the most recent episode in which the Indian government repealed the autonomous status of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019, raising fears about a re-escalation of the conflict into open war.

[\*Aftermath: Life in the Fallout of the Third Reich\*](#) by **Harald Jähner**. Much has been written about the Second World War and the final days of the Third Reich. This new book looks beyond 1945 and details life in Germany in the immediate aftermath of the war, including the implications of the country's division into four zones administered by Russia, the US, Britain and France, and the very slow coming to terms with the crimes of the Nazis.

[\*Losing the Long Game: The False Promise of Regime Change in the Middle East\*](#) by **Philip H. Gordon**. Over the past 75 years, the US has over and over again led initiatives to oust governments and change regimes in the Middle East – from Iran to Iraq, Egypt, Libya and Syria. Gordon reviews the reasons and justifications for these campaigns, and explains how and why they often went awry. Even as the US and other Western countries are keen to reduce their engagement in Middle Eastern politics, this book offers an invaluable account of the lessons learned from decades of interventionism.

[\*Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate\*](#) by **Mary Elise Sarotte**. Based on dozens of interviews and other primary sources from both the US and Russia, Sarotte's book details the US-Russia relationship during the 1990s, including a fascinating account of how the US and its Western allies were able to expand NATO eastwards.

## ARTICLES

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[\*Absolute Power\*](#) by **Graeme Wood**. In July this year, US President Joe Biden visits Saudi Arabia to meet with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (aka MBS), whom he had previously described as a pariah. When Wood's article about MBS for *The Atlantic*, based on in-person interviews with the Crown Prince, was published in March this year, it caused quite a stir. Some described it as an uncritical fluff piece designed to rehabilitate MBS, others thought it offered a useful account of the man and the changes he is implementing in the Kingdom.

[\*Can Ron DeSantis Displace Donald Trump as the G.O.P.'s Combatant-in-Chief?\*](#) by **Dexter Filkins**. With the US mid-term elections approaching, speculation over who will challenge President Biden (or an alternative Democratic candidate) in 2024 is already heating up. Donald Trump may well attempt a comeback, but the other Republican often highlighted as the possible next President of the US is Florida Governor Ron DeSantis. In *The New Yorker*, Filkins offers a profile of DeSantis that is nuanced, well-researched and merciless.

[\*Don't delay getting serious about Cislunar Security\*](#) by **Jessie Schingler, Victoria Samson and Nivedita Raju**. More and more space activities are being planned for the moon and the space near it, commonly known as cislunar space. This, the authors contend is a serious problem that needs far more attention from Western governments, including thinking about international norms, and legal protocols to keep nations from misbehaving. Keeping tabs on cislunar space has not been a pressing need outside of a few national space agencies operating spacecraft there and there is no clarity regarding who, when, and what to notify about activities of objects in cislunar space. But given China's recent uptick of activity, in particular, the time to rethink our near orbit is now.

[\*Shinzo Abe Made the World Better\*](#) by **David Frum**. The shocking and tragic assassination of former Japanese PM Shinzo Abe in early July, while on the campaign trail, has caused a period of deep mourning and introspection in Japan. In this piece David Frum looks back at Abe's legacy, which among many other things included rethinking long held concepts of Pacific security. Abe battled against entrenched Japanese norms to reimagine Japan as a Pacific power that could grapple with an increasingly insecure environment and a rising China.

[\*Dangerous Straits: Wargaming a Future Conflict over Taiwan\*](#) by **Stacie Pettyjohn, Becca Wasser and Chris Dougherty**. Until recently, US policymakers and subject matter experts viewed the People's Republic of China's (PRC's) forcible unification with Taiwan as a distant threat. But the mix of rapid Chinese military modernisation, a narrow window for localised near-parity with the US military, and growing pessimism about the prospects for peaceful unification may lead the PRC to perceive that it has the ability to pursue a successful operation against Taiwan. In this article, the Center for New American Security games out all the possible scenarios of a potential Chinese move on Taiwan, concluding that there is no possibility for a quick victory by either side.

