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THE WAR IN UKRAINE AND MULTIPOLARITY

More than a year after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, divisions between the West and Russia have solidified. Beyond Europe and the US, however, countries have been much more cautious in terms of how to position themselves. The notion that we are entering a new multipolar era is being widely debated, with some suggesting that a bipolar world order – with the US on one side and China on the other – is more likely. Regardless, many countries in the Global South, in particular, insist that they will not be forced to take sides and are instead working to navigate a multipolar world. This [report](#) by Aldo Ferrari and Eleonora Tafuro Ambrosetti at the Italian Institute for International Political Studies unpacks the question of the multipolar world order and queries how new it actually is.

WHY DID JACK TEIXEIRA HAVE ACCESS TO SENSITIVE INTEL?

Following the extraordinary story of Jack Teixeira's leaking of highly classified information to his online chat buddies, a large inquiry has taken place as to how such sensitive data was allowed to be accessed by a part-time serviceman of junior rank. [This analysis by the BBC](#) explains how Teixeira may have been allowed to both access such documents, as well as ensure that they were removed from secure facilities. While his motivations remain highly unusual, in that the leaks seem to be driven by nothing more than showing off, questions around the security ecosystem require deep introspection and a possible re-engineering of the handling of sensitive data in the post 9/11 world.

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NATO SUMMIT

This year's NATO Summit is due to take place in Lithuania's Vilnius in July. Inevitably, the agenda will be topped by the war in Ukraine and Finland's (completed) and Sweden's (still outstanding) joining of the alliance. This [report](#) by Franklin Kramer at the Atlantic Council sets out key priorities NATO should adopt to enhance its defence and deterrence capabilities. Amongst other things, he argues for increasing the standard defence spending pledge for members from two per cent to 2.5 per cent of gross domestic product; efforts to expand unmanned air and maritime capabilities, including through investments in artificial intelligence; and the establishment of a 'sustainment initiative' to ensure NATO stocks are sufficient to fight extended campaigns.





THE CHALLENGE TO INDIAN MILITARY MODERNISATION: PEOPLE

India's 2023 defence budget is \$73.8 billion, the third largest in the world behind only the US and China. However, India is facing a number of immense challenges as it seeks to modernise its armed forces. One problem is India's dependence on Russian-made defence equipment. As sanctions continue to hamper Russia's defence industry, which is increasingly focused on equipping Russian forces for the war in Ukraine, India may have to look elsewhere and find more effective ways to boost its domestic defence industry. The most significant challenge, however, as [Fenella McGerty and Viraj Solanki at IISS point out](#), is finding a way to control personnel costs. More than half of India's budget is currently consumed by salaries and pensions.

HOW THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS ARE RESHAPING THE MIDDLE EAST

The Abraham Accords (normalisation agreements between Israel and several Arab states) are nearing their third birthday. Once dismissed as a Trump administration gimmick, the Accords have become a genuine driver of the changing regional order of the Middle East. The Israel-UAE relationship is going from strength to strength, thus far mostly unencumbered by the hard-right government in Jerusalem and the rising tensions in the West Bank; and trends towards more regional engagement are also continuing. Sanam Vakil and Neil Quilliam's [research paper](#) explains how the Accords have already reshaped the Middle East, and what else we might expect in the coming years. They also highlight the central role of the US in the Accords, which underscores the importance of discussions about the future of Washington's commitment to the security of the region. The launch event for the paper, with comments from both authors and additional experts, can be re-watched on the Chatham House [website](#).

ISRAEL'S JUDICIAL REFORM AND NATIONAL SECURITY

The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), Israel's premier think tank focusing on defence and security issues, has issued a ['Strategic Alert'](#), a research paper in which it outlines how it sees the Israeli government's highly controversial judicial reform package posing a serious threat to national security. Considering that many of INSS's senior leaders are former defence and security officials, this direct criticism of government policy is particularly interesting. The paper argues that the reforms are not just undermining Israeli democracy, but could negatively affect Israel's ability to deal with key threats such as that posed by Iran. The [launch event](#), with a speech by INSS director Manuel Trajtenberg, is also worth watching.

WIDER READING

In [*Spying through a Glass Darkly*](#), Oxford Professor Cecile Fabre debates the ethics and philosophical underpinnings behind the profession of espionage. The premise of the book is that the profession (seen by some such as Immanuel Kant as morally indefensible) is a necessary tool of statecraft, and indeed carries an intrinsic moral good if it results in the protection of lives. However, Fabre readily admits that the tools of espionage such as deception, blackmail, and mass surveillance can be extremely contentious, and pose deep moral conundrums – especially for democracies. The text is thought provoking and raises pertinent questions for those acting in the national security space. This is an extremely well thought out work that is more on the scholarly side than the policy side, but for those in the Armed Forces who have served on front-lines the broad moral contours that govern espionage will feel familiar.

EUROPE AND THE GEOPOLITICS OF TECHNOLOGY

The conflict in Ukraine, and in particular Western efforts to punish Russia with sanctions, has further intensified a debate that came to the fore in the context of the US-China trade war during the Trump administration and the Covid-19 pandemic: the resilience and reordering of global technology supply chains. [Mathieu Duchatel at the Institute Montaigne in France](#) has explored Europe's position in these new geopolitics of technology – and although Duchatel focuses on the EU, his arguments appear just as relevant to the UK. He outlines both the fragility and remarkable resilience of supply chains to date, and explores how Europe can navigate a world in which global powers – Russia, China, the US – could increasingly look to weaponise their sway over certain supply chains to their advantage.



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:

Mexico City police has [arrested notorious MS-13 gang leader](#) Mara Salvatrucha and extradited him to El Salvador; it is the latest development in Mexico's ongoing struggle to restore public safety in the face of gang and cartel violence, which also has a regional dimension that stretches both north and south.

Brazil's President [Lula da Silva continues to insist that he can make a contribution to bringing Russia's war in Ukraine to an end](#); Russia has welcomed Brazil's initiative, the US and most of the West remain sceptical to critical.

The UN warns that at least [48 million people in West and Central Africa face acute food insecurity](#) in the coming months that could escalate into full-scale famine.

Tunisian President [Said continues to crack down on any form of opposition](#); his most recent steps include the arrest of Rashid Ghannouchi, leader of the Islamist Ennahda party.

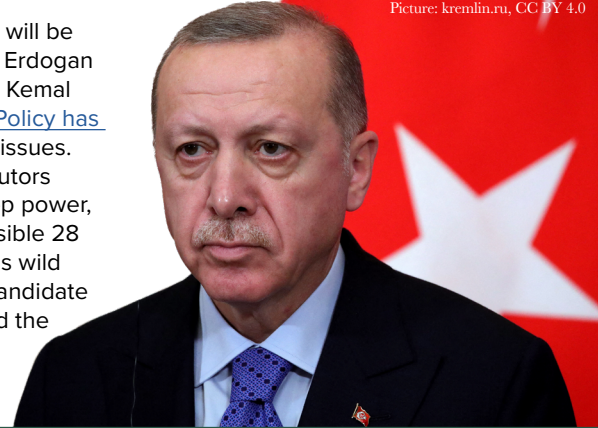
The UK's [GCHQ warns that China is seeking to establish 'global technological supremacy' in cyberspace](#), emphasising the need for the UK and its allies to double their efforts in the domain.

[Syria's reintegration into regional politics in the Middle East has advanced further](#) in early April, most notably with the visit of Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan to Damascus.

[China's latest set of military exercises in around Taiwan](#) further fuel concerns of an impending conflict.

TURKEY'S ELECTIONS PROMISE TO BE HOTLY CONTESTED

On 14 May Turks will head to the polls to decide who will be the country's next President. Incumbent Recep Tayyip Erdogan (pictured right) will square off against CHP candidate Kemal Kilicdaroglu. [The Washington Institute for Near East Policy has put together a policy note](#) to help explain all the key issues. Turkey expert Soner Cagaptay and his fellow contributors concur that Erdogan will use polarising tactics to keep power, whatever the results of the 14 May balloting or a possible 28 May presidential runoff. They also assess how various wild card developments – including the entry of spoiler candidate Muharrem Ince and meddling from Russia – could aid the Turkish leader in unforeseen ways.



Picture: kremlin.ru, CC BY 4.0

VIOLENT CONFLICT IN SUDAN

On 15 April, brewing tensions between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary organisation with roots in the Darfur conflict, escalated into violence, first in the capital Khartoum, then spreading across the country. At the time of writing, Sudan's full-scale descent into civil war appeared possible. Cameron Hudson, an associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, provides a useful [primer](#) on the conflict, outlining the background of the conflict, the interests and motivations of the rival forces, as well as their capabilities and international links. CSIS has also explored the impact of the conflict on Russian interests in the region, particularly those of the Wagner Group. [In this article](#) Catrina Dooxsee looks at Russia's key interests in Sudan, particularly gold mining and the construction of a Red Sea naval base. Dooxsee argues that Wagner will try to shape the conflict in a way that suits its favour, by backing General Daglo and his RSF against General Burhan. And notes that how Wagner (and Russia more broadly) behaves in this conflict will be a good bellwether for determining Russian activity across fragile states in the future.

OUT NOW...

● *“With the war in Ukraine coinciding with national elections in Hungary, Orbán may have felt compelled to strike a delicate balance in word and deed that appealed to a domestic audience while balancing relations with Russia and NATO; the proximity and history between Russia and Hungary are inescapable.” – CHACR’s latest Briefing explores the politics, personalities and moving parts that muddy NATO waters. Visit CHACR’s library of commentaries and articles at [chacr.org.uk](#)*

IN-DEPTH BRIEFING // #48 // APRIL 23

THE STRONGMAN & THE SECURITY BLOC #2

AUTHOR
Mick Dunne, Professor of International Politics, University of Exeter

BRUSSELS, BUDAPEST AND THE POLITICALISATION OF NATO

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1 // IN-DEPTH BRIEFING // CHACR

IN-DEPTH BRIEFING // #47 // MARCH 23

TILT TO THE FUTURE WITH A NOD TO THE PAST

AUTHOR
Mick Dunne, Professor of International Politics, University of Exeter

THE CENTRE FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (CSIS) HAS EXPLORED THE IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT ON RUSSIAN INTERESTS IN THE REGION, PARTICULARLY THOSE OF THE WAGNER GROUP.

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PUTIN'S ACHILLES' HEEL?

AUTHOR
Mick Dunne, Professor of International Politics, University of Exeter

RUSSIA'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC WEAKNESSES ARE BEING EXPLOITED BY THE WEST AND BY DOMESTIC OPPOSITION.

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1 // IN-DEPTH BRIEFING // CHACR