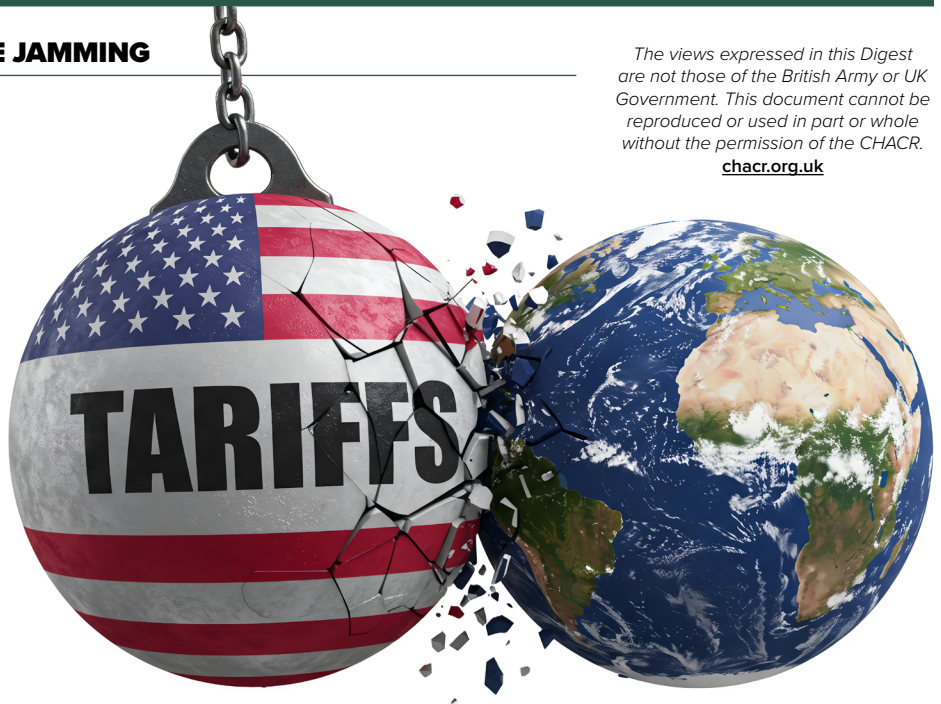




TARIFF TURBULENCE AND SPACE JAMMING

To misquote Edwin Starr, ‘Tariff, huh, what is it good for?’. Commentators across the spectrum have been unusually consistent in their answer – ‘absolutely nothing’. Damning condemnation of both the short- and medium-term global consequences came from Rory Stewart on [The Rest Is Politics](#) podcast, who went so far as to suggest this “is the makings of a global economic crisis” and later released a subsequent episode entitled [Is a Financial Crisis Looming?](#) The RUSI article [US Trade and Trump’s Tariffs – Disruption or Design?](#) considers that “whenever there is a tectonic plate-shift in world order, then geopolitics and economics move in synch and reinforce each other”, concluding that President Trump is aiming to destroy the liberal world order and kill off globalisation in order to replace it with a nationalist economic model. [Chatham House](#) asked if the tariffs marked the end of globalisation, whilst acknowledging that it is the [beginning of a longer-term vision](#) based on a seductive theory that the US can have both power and freedom of action, at home and abroad. Equally they acknowledged that US tariffs will encourage allies to [decouple from their US security reliance](#). Rym Momtaz concluded in a [Carnegie Europe article](#) that Trump’s tariff announcements have upended the fundamentals of American and, by extension, Western hegemony, but for Europe they are an opportunity to reset the terms of the transatlantic bargain, stem the rise of illiberal populism and emerge as a real power.



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In a month that also saw the death of [Pope Francis](#), [renewed hostilities between India and Pakistan](#) and tentative hope for a constructive peace in Ukraine, the Center for Strategic and International Studies issued its [Space Threat Assessment 2025](#), detailing the continuing trend of widespread jamming and spoofing of GPS signals.

USA

In the US, the public version of the annual [national threat assessment](#) shows a marked distinction from the previous iteration. David Ignatius’ *Washington Post* article was analysed by [Daniel Flitton](#), who concluded that “compared with last year’s version, the assessment shows a different ordering of threats to emphasise drug criminals, a new focus on Greenland, and discussion of the Ukraine war that accords with Trump’s negotiating strategy”. This focus on subjects that personally interest President Trump is concerning from a neutrality perspective, although Flitton adds he detects no “fudging [of] the facts.” Nevertheless, as the Washington-based [Center for Climate and Security](#) points out, it makes no mention of climate change.

John Ulyot, a former spokesperson in Trump’s first term, resigned from the Pentagon at the beginning of April. His article in [Politico](#) speaks of a Pentagon in disarray under Pete Hegseth’s leadership, and of an organisation suffering the fallout from two episodes of [Signal-gate](#) and the firing of key staff (including the chief of staff). However, Ulyot advocates firing Hegseth, not because of his incompetence, but so President Trump can maintain the reputation for accountability that he feels President Biden failed to achieve.

RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

The terms of peace in Ukraine are hotly contested, with public announcements unlikely, at this stage, to reflect what is really happening behind closed doors. Dr Andrew Monaghan, writing for the [Wilson Center](#), discusses how, in the Cold War, it was considered critical to see Moscow’s activity in holistic, global terms to understand their view of the future. The West, Russia and the international context has changed, but Monaghan points out, whilst the current era presents a baffling set of problems, it has a valuable strategic inheritance.

[Dr Jade McGlynn](#) also points out that the 2021 Russian [National Security Strategy](#) and [Foreign Policy Concept](#) in 2023 reveal roadmaps for how Russia intended to act and the kind of world it imagined. She concludes: “A new world order is upon us”, but critically, “Russia did not force this world into being, it understood its direction... As the liberal international order weakened, Moscow articulated a coherent alternative — not as a utopia, but as a diagnosis.” Russia foresaw this and as Western democracies falter, “Russia’s ideological map is no fantasy. It is the reality we failed to prevent”.

M. E. Sarotte, writing for [Foreign Affairs](#), warned against basing decisions on erroneous assumptions about history, citing British historian Jonathan Haslam's new book, *Hubris: The American Origins of Russia's War Against Ukraine* as an example and President Trump's view that Ukraine was to blame for Russia's full-scale invasion. Sarotte is clear "to assign blame elsewhere is to absolve the guilty party in this war – Russia", and negotiating a peace accord on the basis of distorted history will yield a permissive environment for future attacks by Moscow, in Ukraine and beyond. Equally, the importance of understanding Russia's world-view and how Russian decision-makers perceive conflict was emphasised by Catherine Royle, a political adviser to NATO, in a [SMA Speaker session](#).

EUROPE, NATO, UK

The NATO Review article [How Poland and Germany are shifting the dial on European defence expenditure](#) is an interesting insight, not just into Poland and Germany's defence spending, but the importance the Alliance places on internal messaging. The article is clear "every European – whether consciously or not – has been a victim of [Russian] hostile acts" and "increased defence spending and greater cooperation in NATO are essential in order to keep Europe safe". Perhaps more insightfully, it focuses on a message to the US that "Europe is prioritising the defence of the continent, with the support of Allies Canada and the US". The challenge of creating a [European reassurance force for Ukraine](#) without US support was acknowledged in an IISS paper that also addressed the potential complications of national caveats, rules of engagement and acceptable levels of risk.

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace asked eight academics from across Europe to comment on whether [Europeans can build their independent extended nuclear deterrent](#). First, they raised the more important question, should they? Most recognised that an additional independent nuclear deterrence in Europe would not be quick, easy or cheap and that focus should be on conventional forces to prevent future Russian territorial aspirations. However, it was also recognised that a third European nuclear power would add uncertainty to Russian strategic calculations. A perspective the Council on Geostrategy takes in their article [The case for a British sub-strategic nuclear deterrent](#).

Looking to the High North, [The Financial Times](#) highlighted that Russia has intensively militarised the Northern Sea Route, a 5,600km-long passage connecting the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, and reconstituted the Leningrad military district to bolster its borders with Finland and Norway. According to climate scientists, by 2050 the route will be ice-free in September, cutting journey time from Asia to Europe by nearly one-third – hence why China has invested heavily in Arctic energy exploration and declared itself a "near-Arctic state". The importance of NATO preparations to contest Russian aggression in any environment is also explored in the article [We need to pay closer attention to Svalbard](#).



Meanwhile, in the context of the arrest of Ekrem İmamoğlu and subsequent domestic unrest in Turkey, [Dr Ahmet Erdi Öztürk](#) points out that President Erdogan's arrest has elicited little international criticism because Turkey is a stabiliser in many global crises and concludes policy makers around the world prefer repressive stabilisation in Turkey over democratic dynamism. He argues the future of Turkish politics cannot be considered separately from its position in the world and evolving global political balances.

John Foreman, former UK Defence adviser in Kyiv and Moscow, writes that [Britain's military chiefs should be meeting with China](#) as it allows for transparency about each other's ambitions, national interests and military developments, and provides the means to manage escalation. The outrage from China hawks in the UK about the meeting, accusing Admiral Radakin of 'a ghastly game of appeasement', failed to recognise that "seeking to understand a potential adversary is not to defend how they behave".

AFRICA

The split between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Alliance of Sahel States (Alliance des États du Sahel – AES), formalised by the withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger from ECOWAS in January, represents a major political reconfiguration in West Africa and threatens to exacerbate instability in the Sahel region, according to [Chatham House](#). In social, economic, political and security terms, the fates of the landlocked Sahelian countries and the nations of coastal West Africa remain tightly intertwined as they face the same array of transnational threats. The article concludes regional unity is the only viable long-term response.

In contrast to the US-led tariff war, [ISS African Futures](#) presents a detailed analysis of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), an opportunity to create an integrated, continent-wide market and a vital step towards the aspirations of the African Union Agenda 2063. The article examines the implications of growth, poverty, trade values and carbon emissions on the pan-African continent. The potential benefits are considerable, if realised. AfCFTA is projected to increase Africa's gross domestic product by around 10 per cent and reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty by over 32 million by 2043. However, it also recognises that increases in trade volumes will increase Africa's fossil fuel [carbon emissions](#) by 5.8 per cent in 2043.

The Economist published two articles of note on Africa in April. The first, [Friends with benefits? The country still in thrall to the Wagner Group](#), detailed how the Central African Republic, by inviting Wagner into the country, was acting in ‘anti-colonial defiance’ and quotes Maxime Balalou, the Minister of Communication, as stating that “we are in the middle of a geopolitical war”. The second reports that this ‘geopolitical war’ has manifest itself in a “[smash and grab for Red Sea ports](#)”. Notably, whilst America has bolstered its naval presence in the Red Sea, reports that the US is considering pulling out of Djibouti and cutting support for Somalia’s fight against jihadists risks intensifying geopolitical competition in the region. What is clear from *The Economist* article, and wider commentary from [The Africa Brief](#), is that conflicts in Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia reflect a broader, global power struggle over Red Sea access with foreign influence (including UAE, Turkey, Russia and Iran) increasingly shaping local conflicts. Both report that, in the context of Houthi attacks that cut Red Sea cargo traffic in 2024 by over 65 per cent, the Horn of Africa is becoming a testing ground for a new era of competition as fragile states risk losing control to foreign militaries and billion-dollar port deals.



INDO-PACIFIC



As concerns about China’s territorial aspirations grow, Chatham House has published an article entitled [China’s military build-up indicates it is serious about taking Taiwan](#). Development of D-Day-style landing barges, unannounced live fire drills and undersea cable cutting suggests it is moving to a state of readiness. The article concludes that if Beijing thinks the US is about to make a decisive commitment to Taiwan, it may act pre-emptively to capitalise on the limited window.

The huge earthquake in Myanmar at the end of March is the latest in a line of tragedies to affect its people in the past few years, writes Dr Bill Hayton for [Chatham House](#), pointing out that, far from heralding the end to the military junta, the earthquake will provoke greater instability and a weakened government more willing to use violence.

Indonesia has historically minimised defence spending and, for a country covering millions of square kilometres of sea, includes relatively few naval and air capabilities. However, The Lowy Institute asks whether the change in [procurement patterns](#) – introduced by Prabowo Subianto as Defence Minister – foretell a sustained shift in Indonesia’s strategic posture now that he is President.

Australia’s federal budget re-prioritised development funding in response to recent USAID cuts and included \$44 million allocated to updating Australia’s [intelligence community](#). However, The [Lowy Institute](#) is clear a broader foreign policy strategy to navigate the shifting world order was missing. Australia’s last [foreign policy white paper](#) was in 2017 and Australia has since gone from friend to enemy to ‘frenemy’ with China, launched AUKUS, and now faces the need to reassess its relationship with America. The Lowy Institute concludes: “The question is not whether we need a new foreign policy white paper – it’s why we haven’t already started drafting one.”

OUT NOW & COMING SOON...

● *“The first duty of any government is to ensure the safety and security of its people. Outwith terrorism on our shores, we have accepted that security from conventional military threats is delivered through protecting at reach, by deterring through being prepared to fight battles on the continent with allies. In the lee of the end of the Cold War, the peace dividend resulted in a deliberate switch to lean ‘just in time’ solutions and a reliance on an international military industrial base, privileging value for money over resilience. We are now coming to realise that both these methods must change if we are to counter the threats of today and tomorrow; and that there is a requirement for hard conventional security at home and increased resilience across our capabilities, from workforce to a sovereign industrial base.” – Lieutenant General Charlie Collins, Commander Standing Joint Command, writing in the latest edition of [The British Army Review, Safe Home?](#).*

● *The world is less safe than it has been for more than half a century – there is a storm coming.*

Storm Proofing, edited by the team at the CHACR, offers the collected thoughts of 15 experts – respected practitioners and academics from the UK, US and Europe. They consider what is being done, whether that is sufficient, and how we might think differently about our preparations for 21st century war on land. This is not a book about numbers of troops and equipment, it is rather more human than that. So, it is about how we approach war, how armies might structure themselves and align themselves to modern contexts, how soldiers should think and might feel and, how all of those very human things relate to the march of technology and artificial intelligence. Register your interest for a copy [here](#).

