



Highlights This Month

Is China a Winner from the Red Sea Attacks?

Article, *The Economist*

1 February 2024

Since mid-November, when Houthi rebels in Yemen began attacking shipping in the Red Sea with missiles and drones, American officials have been prodding China to show some of that great-power spirit by helping to resolve a real-life crisis in the region. However, as this fascinating article demonstrates, it does not want to flex muscle in the Middle East. China sees the region's security as a quagmire of America's making and is exploiting it an opportunity to talk up solidarity with the Arab world.

[Read the Article Here ...](#)

From Space to Seabed: Protecting the UK's Undersea Cables from Hostile Actors

Report, *Policy Exchange*

Marcus Solarz Hendriks and Harry Halem | 19 February 2024

As reports of mysterious cable-cutting incidents and suspicious Russian activity near subsea infrastructure become increasingly common, this report urges the UK Government to formulate a clear and comprehensive strategy for defending against growing threats to the undersea cables, which power global digital and energy connectivity.

[Read the Report Here ...](#)

Do Nothing: An Alternative Opinion on Critical National Infrastructure and Seabed Warfare

Journal Article, *Wavell Room*

Cdr Alex Westley | 15 February 2024

Can deliberate sabotage of seabed infrastructure be stopped? What happens after? Is redundancy its own deterrent? What should defence do? RNSSC First Sea Lord Fellow, Alex Westley, reflects on these key questions around the problem of seabed infrastructure defence and explores what the 'Do Nothing' (or at least very little) option would look like in his Wavell Room article.

[Read the Article Here ...](#)

Why the Flagging Standards of Flag States are a Problem for Everyone

Podcast, *Lloyd's List*

Steen Brodsgaard Lund and Guy Platten | 21 January 2024

Between dark fleet ships evading sanctions and fraudulently flagged ships disappearing off the radar completely, there is a growing number of old, unsafe ships trading outside of the established rules-based order of global trading standards. This podcast argues that the heart of the problem are flag states that fail to offer basic oversight of the ships they purport to regulate and that gap threatens an environmental catastrophe.

[Listen to the Podcast Here ...](#)

Drifting Away? Russia's Dissatisfaction with the Law of the Sea

Article, *RUSI*

Caroline Tuckett and Dr Kevin Rowlands | 9 February 2024

Should Russia withdraw from UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)? For Head of the RNSSC, Dr Kevin Rowlands, and Associate Fellow, Caroline Tuckett, this would spell the start of the end of the current near-global consensus on the governance of the oceans.

[Read the Article Here ...](#)

Cocaine Codfish

Podcast, *CIMSEC*

Walker Mills and Aaron Delano-Johnson | 17 February 2024

Aaron Delano-Johnson, a Captain in the U.S. Coast Guard, joins Walker Mills to discuss how to apply lessons from counternarcotics operations to combating IUU fishing.

[Listen to the Podcast Here ...](#)

The UK's participation in Air Strikes on Yemen Exposes its Diminished Military Strength

Article, *Chatham House*

Professor Andrew Dorman | 12 January 2024

In this thought-provoking piece, Andrew Dorman, writing for Chatham House, suggest that the strikes against the Houthis can be seen as highlighting the UK's diminished military capabilities. In particular, countries such as Russia and China will note the limited contribution the RAF and Royal Navy were able to make.

[Read the Article Here ...](#)

Russia's Six Fleets: A Sinking Superpower

Podcast/Video, *The Red Line*

Michael Hilliard | 10 January 2024

Russia's naval forces, structured around six distinct fleets, are navigating turbulent waters in the current geopolitical climate. While all six of these fleets have seen modest improvements, especially in their submarine capabilities, the conflict in Ukraine is now stretching resources thin, with senior figures from within the Navy warning that the Army's problem today, is going to be the Navy's problem tomorrow. This looming situation poses critical questions, like how will Russia's navy will adapt to these emerging challenges, and what programs are likely to face the chopping block when times get tough? Mike Hilliard is joined by Nick Childs, Mark Galeotti, and H.I. Sutton to answer these questions and more.

[Listen to the Podcast Here ...](#)

Coordinating and Deconflicting Naval Operations in the Western Indian Ocean

Journal Article, *RUSI*

Christian Bueger | 9 February 2024

With the Houthi threat, the recent resurfacing of piracy, and continuing patterns of blue crime contributing to growing insecurity in the Western Indian Ocean, Christian Bueger argues that fresh efforts are needed to coordinate and deconflict the patchwork of naval operations in the region.

[Read the Article Here ...](#)

Events and Notices

Special Forces in the First World War

Dr James Pritchett

19 March 2024

13:00 - 14:00 GMT

MS Teams

Read or listened to something that merits inclusion in this Digest?

Please send, with a summary, to the RNSSC mailbox (NavyStratPol-RNSSC@mod.gov.uk).

The RNSSC are delighted to host James, Lecturer in War Studies in the School of Politics and International at University of Hull, for the **March Lunchtime Lecture**. Please find the link on the RNSSC's SharePoint. Alternatively, contact the RNSSC mailbox.

The Digest is sent to the RN's senior leadership team, with the request to **please cascade**. To contact us with questions, feedback or to be added to or unsubscribe from the mailing list please send an email to NavyStratPol-RNSSC@mod.gov.uk.