

ROYAL NAVY STRATEGIC STUDIES
CENTRE (RNSSC)

Strategic Digest

March 2023



Highlights This Month

Preliminary Lessons from Russia's Unconventional Operations During the Russo- Ukrainian War, February 2022–February 2023

Report, *RUSI*

Jack Watling, Oleksandr V Danylyuk and Nick Reynolds | 29 March 2023

What does sub-threshold operations look like from a Russian standpoint? In their latest Special Report on the Ukraine war, Dr Jack Watling & Nicholas Reynolds chart the progress of Russia's unconventional ways and means that supported and prepared the ground for its conventional assault. If we are serious about competing in the grey zone, then Ukraine gives us a clear case study in Russian methods.

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

The Russian General Staff

Report, *RAND*

Alexis A. Blanc, Alyssa Demus, Sandra Kay Evans, Michelle Gris , Mark Hvizda, Marta Kepe, Natasha Lander, Krystyna Marcinek | 22 March 2023

This report functions as a foundational text for policymakers and war fighters to improve their understanding of the Russian General Staff. The Russian General Staff is unlike any organization within the U.S. or U.K. defence establishments. This absence of an analogue means that Western civilian and military communities are mostly unfamiliar with the notion of a General Staff. Because of the increasing militarization of Russian foreign policy since 2008, it is fundamental to understand not only the formal roles and

responsibilities of this institution, but also its ability to influence Russia's national security decision-making procedure.

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

“Resilient” Isn’t the Compliment You Think It Is

Article, *Harvard Business Review*

Simran Jeet Singh | 22 March 2023

Resilience has become such a hackneyed and celebrated notion that it can become a cop-out, both for leaders managing people one on one, and for organizations in the manner in which they treat groups of people. In particular, when it comes to individuals from marginalized groups, assuming that the adversity they have endured creates thick skin is insensitive and othering. A particularly pertinent article given the complex nature of our workforce, and the constant drive to improve individual resilience.

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

China’s Naval Strategists Dissect Ukraine’s USV Strike on Russia’s Black Sea Fleet Base

Article, *The Diplomat*

Lyle Goldstein and Nathan Waechter | 23 March 2023

This article examines the Chinese media coverage of the war in Ukraine. The close nature of the China-Russia “quasi-alliance” means that Chinese military analysts have not participated in the biting critiques of Russian military performance that have been commonplace in the West. Yet, Chinese military analyses are still probing deeply for lessons to understand the shape of modern warfare. They have taken particular interest in the U.S. employment of novel weapons and strategies.

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

Atomic Strait: How China’s Nuclear Buildup Shapes Security Dynamics with Taiwan and the United States

Report, *CNAS*

Jacob Stokes | 7 February 2023

Beijing is rapidly modernizing its nuclear arsenal. Changes include an increase in warhead numbers from more than 400 today to

potentially 700 by 2027 and more beyond, consolidating a nuclear triad, developing new delivery systems, and digging at least 300 new missile silos. In this report, Jacob Stokes examines the intersection of China's nuclear modernization and cross-Strait tensions, particularly how they might play out in a conflict involving China, Taiwan, and the United States.

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

Float, Move, and Fight: How the U.S. Navy lost the shipbuilding race.

Article, *Foreign Policy*

Alexander Wooley | 2021

An interesting article that focuses on US shipbuilding and the failures they have encountered along the way.

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

Four Battlegrounds: Power in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Book, *W. W. Norton*

Paul Scharre | February 2023

Autonomous weapons expert Paul Scharre lays bare the fierce competition between the AI superpowers - China, the United States and Europe - to develop and implement this game-changing technology. He analyses the ways AI systems are already finding our new strategies via millions of war-game simulations, producing combat tactics better than any human, tracking billions of people using biometrics and algorithms. Engaging and forthright, *Four Battlegrounds* provides a vivid picture of how AI is transforming warfare, global security and the future of human freedom - and what it will take for democracies to stay at the forefront of the world order.

Events and Notices

'Losing a War of Attrition'

Dr Richard Hammond

Read or listened to something that you

25 April 2023
13:00 - 14:00 GMT
MS Teams

think merits inclusion in this Digest?

The RNSSC are delighted to host Richard for the **April's Lunchtime Lecture**. May's lecturer is programmed to be Samuel Jardine (timing and subject to be confirmed).

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

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 the mailing list please send an email to NavyStratPol-RNSSC@mod.gov.uk.